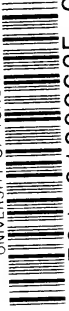
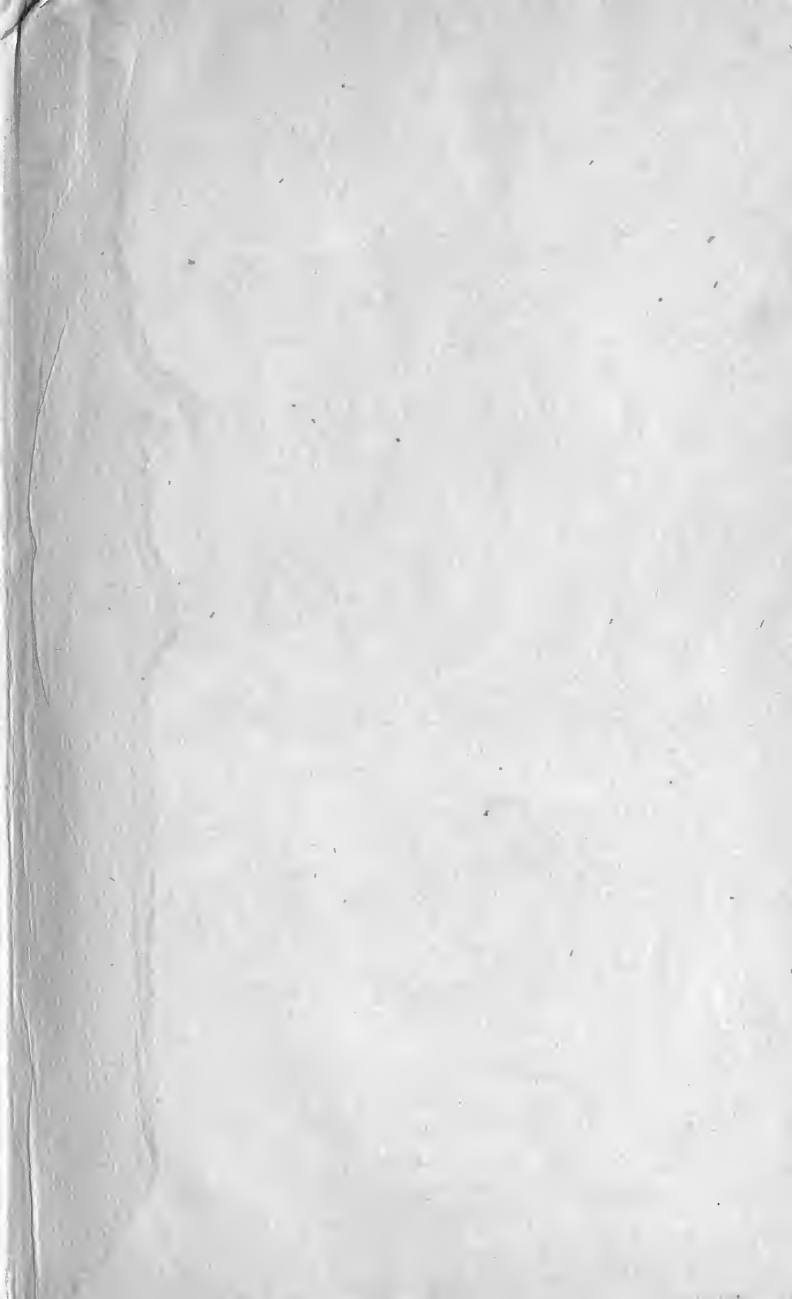


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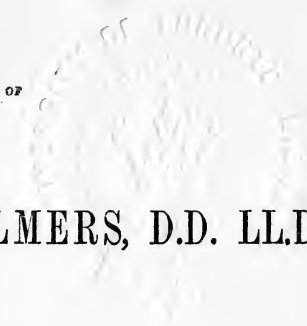


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Relig.  
Theol.

SELECT WORKS



THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. LL.D.

EDITED BY HIS SON-IN-LAW,

THE REV. WILLIAM HANNA, LL.D.

VOL. III.

EDINBURGH: THOMAS CONSTABLE AND CO.

HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., LONDON.

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ELECTRONIC VERSION  
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# SERMONS

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. LL.D.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH: THOMAS CONSTABLE AND CO.  
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., LONDON.

MDCCCLV.

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\* \* \* *In this and the subsequent Volume the reader will find ALL the Sermons published by Dr. Chalmers himself, as well as the favourite Discourse on Isaiah vii. 3-5, which was not published till after his death.*

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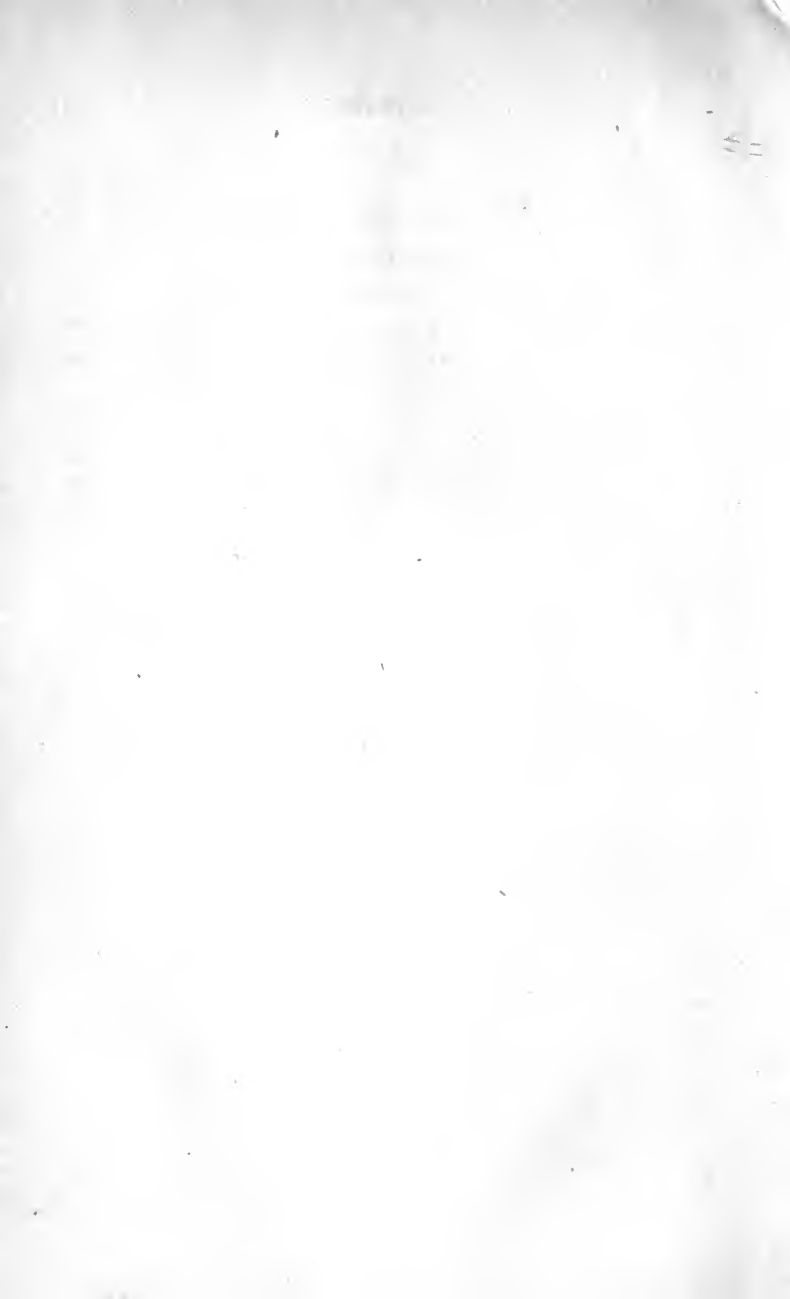
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DISCOURSES  
ON  
THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION  
VIEWED IN CONNEXION WITH  
MODERN ASTRONOMY.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1912

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

PHYSICS 101

# ASTRONOMICAL DISCOURSES.

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## PREFACE.

THE astronomical objection against the truth of the Gospel does not occupy a very prominent place in any of our Treatises of Infidelity. It is often, however, met with in conversation—and we have known it to be the cause of serious perplexity and alarm in minds anxious for the solid establishment of their religious faith.

There is an imposing splendour in the science of Astronomy; and it is not to be wondered at, if the light it throws, or appears to throw, over other tracks of speculation than those which are properly its own, should at times dazzle and mislead an inquirer. On this account, we think it were a service to what we deem a true and a righteous cause, could we succeed in dissipating this illusion, and in stripping Infidelity of those pretensions to enlargement, and to a certain air of philosophical greatness, by which it has often become so destructively alluring to the young, and the ardent, and the ambitious.

In my first Discourse, I have attempted a sketch of the Modern Astronomy—nor have I wished to throw any disguise over that comparative littleness which belongs to our planet, and which gives to the argument of Freethinkers all its plausibility.

This argument involves in it an assertion and an inference. The assertion is, that Christianity is a religion which professes to be designed for the single benefit of our world; and the inference is, that God cannot be the author of this religion, for He would not lavish on so insignificant a field such peculiar and such distinguishing attentions as are ascribed to Him in the Old and New Testaments.

Christianity makes no such profession. That it is designed for the single benefit of our world is altogether a presumption of the infidel himself—and feeling that this is not the only example of temerity which can be charged on the enemies of our faith, I have allotted my second Discourse to the attempt of demonstrating the utter repugnance of such a spirit with the cautious and enlightened philosophy of modern times.

In the course of this Sermon I have offered a tribute of acknowledgment to the theology of Sir Isaac Newton; and in such terms as, if not farther explained, may be liable to misconstruction. The grand circumstance of applause in the character of this great man, is, that unseduced by all the magnificence of his own discoveries, he had a solidity of mind which could resist their fascination, and keep him in steady attachment to that Book, whose general evidences stamped upon it the impress of a real communication from Heaven. This was the sole attribute of his theology which I had in my eye when I presumed to eulogize it. I do not think that, amid the distraction and the engrossment of his other pursuits, he has at all times succeeded in his interpretation of the Book; else he would never, in my apprehension, have abetted the leading doctrine of a sect or a system, which has now nearly dwindled away from public observation.

In my third Discourse I am silent as to the assertion, and attempt to combat the inference that is founded on it. I insist that upon all the analogies of nature and of providence, we can lay no limit on the condescension of God, or on the multiplicity of His regards even to the very humblest departments of creation; and that it is not for us, who see the evidences of Divine wisdom and care spread in such exhaustless profusion around us, to say, that the Deity would not lavish all the wealth of His wondrous attributes on the salvation even of our solitary species.

At this point of the argument, I trust that the intelligent reader may be enabled to perceive, in the adversaries of the Gospel, a twofold dereliction from the maxims of the Baconian philosophy: that, in the first instance, the assertion which forms the groundwork of their argument is gratuitously fetched out of an unknown region, where they are utterly abandoned by the light of experience; and that, in the second instance, the inference they urge from it is in the face of manifold and undeniable truths, all lying within the safe and accessible field of human observation.

In my subsequent Discourses, I proceed to the informations

of the Record. The Infidel objection drawn from Astronomy may be considered as by this time disposed of; and if we have succeeded in clearing it away, so as to deliver the Christian testimony from all discredit upon this ground, then may we submit, on the strength of other evidences, to be guided by its information. We shall thus learn that Christianity has a far more extensive bearing on the other orders of creation than the Infidel is disposed to allow; and whether he will own the authority of this information or not, he will at least be forced to admit that the subject-matter of the Bible itself is not chargeable with that objection which he has attempted to fasten upon it.

Thus, had my only object been the refutation of the Infidel argument, I might have spared the last Discourses of the Series altogether. But the tracks of Scriptural information to which they directed me, I considered as worthy of prosecution on their own account; and I do think that much may be gathered from these less observed portions of the field of revelation, to cheer, and to elevate, and to guide the believer.

But in the management of such a discussion as this, though for a great degree of this effect it would require to be conducted in a far higher style than I am able to sustain, the taste of the human mind may be regaled, and its understanding put into a state of the most agreeable exercise. Now this is quite distinct from the conscience being made to feel the force of a personal application; nor could I either bring this argument to its close in the pulpit, or offer it to the general notice of the world, without adverting, in the last Discourse, to a delusion which I fear is carrying forward thousands and tens of thousands to an undone eternity.

I have closed the Series with an Appendix of Scriptural Authorities.\* I found that I could not easily interweave them in the texture of the Work, and have, therefore, thought fit to present them in a separate form. I look for a twofold benefit from this exhibition—first, to those more general readers who are ignorant of the Scriptures, and of the richness and variety which abound in them—and, secondly, to those narrow and intolerant professors, who take an alarm at the very sound and semblance of philosophy, and feel as if there was an utterly irreconcilable antipathy between its lessons on the one hand, and the soundness and piety of the Bible on the other. It

\* The Passages which serve to illustrate or to confirm the leading arguments employed, will, in this Edition, be found at the end of each Discourse.

were well, I conceive, for our cause that the latter could become a little more indulgent on this subject; that they gave up a portion of those ancient and hereditary prepossessions which go so far to cramp and to intral them; that they would suffer theology to take that wide range of argument and of illustration which belongs to her; and that, less sensitively jealous of any desecration being brought upon the Sabbath or the pulpit, they would suffer her freely to announce all those truths, which either serve to protect Christianity from the contempt of science, or to protect the teachers of Christianity from those invasions which are practised both on the sacredness of the office, and on the solitude of its devotional and intellectual labours.

## DISCOURSE I.

## A SKETCH OF THE MODERN ASTRONOMY.

“When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”—PSALM viii. 3, 4.

IN the reasonings of the Apostle Paul, we cannot fail to observe, how studiously he accommodates his arguments to the pursuits or principles or prejudices of the people whom he was addressing. He often made a favourite opinion of their own the starting-point of his explanation; and educing a dexterous but irresistible train of argument from some principle upon which each of the parties had a common understanding, it was his practice to force them out of all their opposition by a weapon of their own choosing,—nor did he scruple to avail himself of a Jewish peculiarity, or a heathen superstition, or a quotation from Greek poetry, by which he might gain the attention of those whom he laboured to convince, and by the skilful application of which he might “shut them up unto the faith.”

Now, when Paul was thus addressing one class of an assembly or congregation, another class might, for the time, have been shut out of all direct benefit and application from his arguments. When he wrote an Epistle to a mixed assembly of Christianized Jews and Gentiles, he had often to direct such a process of argument to the former, as the latter would neither require nor comprehend. Now, what should have been the conduct of the Gentiles at the reading of that part of the Epistle which bore almost an exclusive reference to the Jews? Should it be impatience at the hearing of something for which they had no relish or understanding? Should it be a fretful disappointment because everything that was said was not said for their edification? Should it be angry discontent with the Apostle, because, leaving them in the dark, he had brought forward nothing for them through the whole extent of so many successive chapters? Some of them may have felt in this way; but

surely it would have been vastly more Christian to have sat with meek and unfeigned patience, and to have rejoiced that the great Apostle had undertaken the management of those obstinate prejudices, which kept back so many human beings from the participation of the Gospel. And should Paul have had reason to rejoice, that, by the success of his arguments he had reconciled one or any number of Jews to Christianity, then it was the part of these Gentiles, though receiving no direct or personal benefit from the arguments, to have blessed God, and rejoiced along with him.

Conceive that Paul were at this moment alive, and zealously engaged in the work of pressing the Christian religion on the acceptance of the various classes of society,—Should he not still have acted on the principle of being all things to all men? Should he not have accommodated his discussion to the prevailing taste and literature and philosophy of the times? Should he not have closed with the people, whom he was addressing, on some favourite principle of their own; and, in the prosecution of this principle, might he not have got completely beyond the comprehension of a numerous class of zealous, humble, and devoted Christians? Now, the question is not, how these would conduct themselves in such circumstances?—but, how should they do it? Would it be right in them to sit with impatience, because the argument of the Apostle contained in it nothing in the way of comfort or edification to themselves? Should not the benevolence of the Gospel give a different direction to their feelings? And, instead of that narrow, exclusive, and monopolizing spirit, which I fear is too characteristic of the more declared professors of the truth as it is in Jesus, ought they not to be patient, and to rejoice, when to philosophers, and to men of literary accomplishment, and to those who have the direction of the public taste among the upper walks of society, such arguments are addressed as may bring home to their acceptance also, “the words of this life”? It is under the impulse of these considerations that I have, with some hesitation, prevailed upon myself to attempt an argument, which I think fitted to soften and subdue those prejudices which lie at the bottom of what may be called the infidelity of natural science; if possible to bring over to the humility of the Gospel those who expatiate with delight on the wonders and the sublimities of creation, and to convince them that a loftier wisdom still than that even of their high and honourable acquirements, is the



wisdom of him who is resolved to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

It is truly a most Christian exercise to extract a sentiment of piety from the works and the appearances of nature. It has the authority of the Sacred Writers upon its side, and even our Saviour Himself gives it the weight and the solemnity of His example. "Behold the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet your heavenly Father careth for them." He expatiates on the beauty of a single flower, and draws from it the delightful argument of confidence in God. He gives us to see that taste may be combined with piety, and that the same heart may be occupied with all that is serious in the contemplations of religion, and be at the same time alive to the charms and the loveliness of nature.

The Psalmist takes a still loftier flight. He leaves the world, and lifts his imagination to that mighty expanse which spreads above it and around it. He wings his way through space, and wanders in thought over its immeasurable regions. Instead of a dark and unpeopled solitude, he sees it crowded with splendour, and filled with the energy of the Divine presence. Creation rises in its immensity before him; and the world, with all which it inherits, shrinks into littleness at a contemplation so vast and so overpowering. He wonders that he is not overlooked amid the grandeur and the variety which are on every side of him; and passing upward from the majesty of nature to the majesty of nature's Architect, he exclaims, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou shouldest deign to visit him?"

It is not for us to say, whether inspiration revealed to the Psalmist the wonders of the modern astronomy. But even though the mind be a perfect stranger to the science of these enlightened times, the heavens present a great and an elevating spectacle—an immense concave reposing on the circular boundary of the world, and the innumerable lights which are suspended from on high, moving with solemn regularity along its surface. It seems to have been at night that the piety of the Psalmist was awakened by this contemplation, when the moon and the stars were visible, and not when the sun had risen in his strength, and thrown a splendour around him, which bore down and eclipsed all the lesser glories of the firmament. And there is much in the scenery of a nocturnal sky, to lift the soul to pious contemplation. That moon, and these stars, what are

they? They are detached from the world, and they lift us above it. We feel withdrawn from the earth, and rise in lofty abstraction from this little theatre of human passions and human anxieties. The mind abandons itself to reverie, and is transferred in the ecstasy of its thoughts to distant and unexplored regions. It sees nature in the simplicity of her great elements, and it sees the God of nature invested with the high attributes of wisdom and majesty.

But what can these lights be? The curiosity of the human mind is insatiable; and the mechanism of these wonderful heavens has, in all ages, been its subject and its employment. It has been reserved for these latter times to resolve this great and interesting question. The sublimest powers of philosophy have been called to the exercise, and astronomy may now be looked upon as the most certain and best established of the sciences.

We all know that every visible object appears less in magnitude as it recedes from the eye. The lofty vessel, as it retires from the coast, shrinks into littleness, and at last appears in the form of a small speck on the verge of the horizon. The eagle, with its expanded wings, is a noble object; but when it takes its flight into the upper regions of the air, it becomes less to the eye, and is seen like a dark spot upon the vault of heaven. The same is true of all magnitude. The heavenly bodies appear small to the eye of an inhabitant of this earth, only from the immensity of their distance. When we talk of hundreds of millions of miles, it is not to be listened to as incredible. For remember that we are talking of those bodies which are scattered over the immensity of space, and that space knows no termination. The conception is great and difficult, but the truth is unquestionable. By a process of measurement which it is unnecessary at present to explain, we have ascertained first the distance, and then the magnitude of some of those bodies which roll in the firmament; that the sun which presents itself to the eye under so diminutive a form, is really a globe, exceeding, by many thousands of times, the dimensions of the earth which we inhabit; that the moon itself has the magnitude of a world; and that even a few of those stars which appear like so many lucid points to the unassisted eye of the observer, expand into large circles upon the application of the telescope, and are some of them much larger than the ball which we tread upon, and to which we proudly apply the denomination of the universe.

Now, what is the fair and obvious presumption? The world in which we live is a round ball of a determined magnitude, and occupies its own place in the firmament. But when we explore the unlimited tracts of that space which is everywhere around us, we meet with other balls of equal or superior magnitude, and from which our earth would either be invisible, or appear as small as any of those twinkling stars which are seen on the canopy of heaven. Why then suppose that this little spot, little at least in the immensity which surrounds it, should be the exclusive abode of life and of intelligence? What reason to think that those mightier globes which roll in other parts of creation, and which we have discovered to be worlds in magnitude, are not also worlds in use and in dignity? Why should we think that the great Architect of nature, supreme in wisdom as He is in power, would call these stately mansions into existence and leave them unoccupied? When we cast our eye over the broad sea, and look at the country on the other side, we see nothing but the blue land stretching obscurely over the distant horizon. We are too far away to perceive the richness of its scenery, or to hear the sound of its population. Why not extend this principle to the still more distant parts of the universe? What though, from this remote point of observation, we can see nothing but the naked roundness of yon planetary orbs? Are we therefore to say, that they are so many vast and unpeopled solitudes; that desolation reigns in every part of the universe but ours; that the whole energy of the divine attributes is expended on one insignificant corner of these mighty works; and that to this earth alone belongs the bloom of vegetation, or the blessedness of life, or the dignity of rational and immortal existence?

But this is not all. We have something more than the mere magnitude of the planets to allege in favour of the idea that they are inhabited. We know that this earth turns round upon itself; and we observe that all those celestial bodies, which are accessible to such an observation, have the same movement. We know that the earth performs a yearly revolution round the sun; and we can detect, in all the planets which compose our system, a revolution of the same kind, and under the same circumstances. They have the same succession of day and night. They have the same agreeable vicissitude of the seasons. To them light and darkness succeed each other; and the gaiety of summer is followed by the dreariness of winter. To each of them the heavens present as varied and magnificent a spectacle; and this

earth, the encompassing of which would require the labour of years from one of its puny inhabitants, is but one of the lesser lights which sparkle in their firmament. To them, as well as to us, has God divided the light from the darkness, and He has called the light day, and the darkness He has called night. He has said, Let there be lights in the firmament of their heaven, to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven, to give light upon their earth; and it was so. And God has also made to them great lights. To all of them He has given the sun to rule the day; and to many of them has He given moons to rule the night. To them He has made the stars also. And God has set them in the firmament of heaven, to give light upon their earth; and to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God has seen that it was good.

In all these greater arrangements of divine wisdom, we can see that God has done the same things for the accommodation of the planets that He has done for the earth which we inhabit. And shall we say that the resemblance stops here, because we are not in a situation to observe it? Shall we say that this scene of magnificence has been called into being merely for the amusement of a few astronomers? Shall we measure the counsels of heaven by the narrow impotence of the human faculties? or conceive that silence and solitude reign throughout the mighty empire of nature; that the greater part of creation is an empty parade; and that not a worshipper of the Divinity is to be found through the wide extent of yon vast and immeasurable regions?

It lends a delightful confirmation to the argument, when, from the growing perfection of our instruments, we can discover a new point of resemblance between our earth and the other bodies of the planetary system. It is now ascertained, not merely that all of them have their day and night, and that all of them have their vicissitudes of seasons, and that some of them have their moons to rule their night and alleviate the darkness of it;—we can see of one, that its surface rises into inequalities, that it swells into mountains and stretches into valleys; of another, that it is surrounded by an atmosphere which may support the respiration of animals; of a third, that clouds are formed and suspended over it, which may minister to it all the bloom and luxuriance of vegetation; and of a fourth, that a white colour spreads over its northern regions as its winter advances, and that on the

approach of summer this whiteness is dissipated—giving room to suppose, that the element of water abounds in it, that it rises by evaporation into its atmosphere, that it freezes upon the application of cold, that it is precipitated in the form of snow, that it covers the ground with a fleecy mantle, which melts away from the heat of a more vertical sun; and that other worlds bear a resemblance to our own, in the same yearly round of beneficent and interesting changes.

Who shall assign a limit to the discoveries of future ages? Who can prescribe to science her boundaries, or restrain the active and insatiable curiosity of man within the circle of his present acquirements? We may guess with plausibility what we cannot anticipate with confidence. The day may yet be coming, when our instruments of observation shall be inconceivably more powerful. They may ascertain still more decisive points of resemblance. They may resolve the same question by the evidence of sense, which is now so abundantly convincing by the evidence of analogy. They may lay open to us the unquestionable vestiges of art, and industry, and intelligence. We may see summer throwing its green mantle over these mighty tracts, and we may see them left naked and colourless after the flush of vegetation has disappeared. In the progress of years or of centuries, we may trace the hand of cultivation spreading a new aspect over some portion of a planetary surface. Perhaps some large city, the metropolis of a mighty empire, may expand into a visible spot by the powers of some future telescope. Perhaps the glass of some observer, in a distant age, may enable him to construct the map of another world, and to lay down the surface of it in all its minute and topical varieties. But there is no end of conjecture; and to the men of other times we leave the full assurance of what we can assert with the highest probability, that yon planetary orbs are so many worlds, that they teem with life, and that the mighty Being who presides in high authority over this scene of grandeur and astonishment, has there planted the worshippers of His glory.

Did the discoveries of science stop here, we have enough to justify the exclamation of the Psalmist, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou shouldest deign to visit him?" They widen the empire of creation far beyond the limits which were formerly assigned to it. They give us to see that yon sun, throned in the centre of his planetary system, gives light, and warmth, and the vicissitude of seasons, to an ex-

tent of surface several hundreds of times greater than that of the earth which we inhabit. They lay open to us a number of worlds, rolling in their respective circles around this vast luminary—and prove, that the ball which we tread upon, with all its mighty burden of oceans and continents, instead of being distinguished from the others, is among the least of them; and, from some of the more distant planets, would not occupy a visible point in the concave of their firmament. They let us know, that though this mighty earth, with all its myriads of people, were to sink into annihilation, there are some worlds where an event so awful to us would be unnoticed and unknown, and others where it would be nothing more than the disappearance of a little star which had ceased from its twinkling. We should feel a sentiment of modesty at this just but humiliating representation. We should learn not to look on our earth as the universe of God, but one paltry and insignificant portion of it; that it is only one of the many mansions which the Supreme Being has created for the accommodation of His worshippers, and only one of the many worlds rolling in that flood of light which the sun pours around him to the outer limits of the planetary system.

But is there nothing beyond these limits? The planetary system has its boundary, but space has none; and if we wing our fancy there, do we only travel through dark and unoccupied regions? There are only five, or at most six, of the planetary orbs visible to the naked eye. What, then, is that multitude of other lights which sparkle in our firmament, and fill the whole concave of heaven with innumerable splendours? The planets are all attached to the sun; and, in circling around him, they do homage to that influence which binds them to perpetual attendance on this great luminary. But the other stars do not own his dominion. They do not circle around him. To all common observation, they remain immovable; and each, like the independent sovereign of his own territory, appears to occupy the same inflexible position in the regions of immensity. What can we make of them? Shall we take our adventurous flight to explore these dark and untravelled dominions? What mean these innumerable fires lighted up in distant parts of the universe? Are they only made to shed a feeble glimmering over this little spot in the kingdom of nature? or do they serve a purpose worthier of themselves, to light up other worlds, and give animation to other systems?

The first thing which strikes a scientific observer of the fixed stars, is their immeasurable distance. If the whole planetary system were lighted up into a globe of fire, it would exceed, by many millions of times, the magnitude of this world, and yet only appear a small lucid point from the nearest of them. If a body were projected from the sun with the velocity of a cannon-ball, it would take hundreds of thousands of years before it described that mighty interval which separates the nearest of the fixed stars from our sun and from our system. If this earth, which moves at more than the inconceivable velocity of a million and a half miles a day, were to be hurried from its orbit, and to take the same rapid flight over this immense tract, it would not have arrived at the termination of its journey, after taking all the time which has elapsed since the creation of the world. These are great numbers, and great calculations; and the mind feels its own impotency in attempting to grasp them. We can state them in words. We can exhibit them in figures. We can demonstrate them by the powers of a most rigid and infallible geometry. But no human fancy can summon up a lively or an adequate conception—can roam in its ideal flight over this immeasurable largeness—can take in this mighty space in all its grandeur, and in all its immensity—can sweep the outer boundaries of such a creation—or lift itself up to the majesty of that great and invisible arm on which all is suspended.

But what can those stars be which are seated so far beyond the limits of our planetary system? They must be masses of immense magnitude, or they could not be seen at the distance of place which they occupy. The light which they give must proceed from themselves, for the feeble reflection of light from some other quarter would not carry through such mighty tracts to the eye of an observer. A body may be visible in two ways. It may be visible from its own light, as the flame of a candle, or the brightness of a fire, or the brilliancy of yonder glorious sun, which lightens all below, and is the lamp of the world. Or it may be visible from the light which falls upon it, as the body which receives its light from a taper—or the whole assemblage of objects on the surface of the earth, which appear only when the light of day rests upon them—or the moon, which, in that part of it that is towards the sun, gives out a silvery whiteness to the eye of the observer, while the other part forms a black and invisible space in the firmament—or as the planets,

which shine only because the sun shines upon them, and which, each of them, present the appearance of a dark spot on the side that is turned away from it. Now apply this question to the fixed stars. Are they luminous of themselves, or do they derive their light from the sun, like the bodies of our planetary system? Think of their immense distance, and the solution of this question becomes evident. The sun, like any other body, must dwindle into a less apparent magnitude as you retire from it. At the prodigious distance even of the very nearest of the fixed stars, it must have shrunk into a small indivisible point. In short, it must have become a star itself, and could shed no more light than a single individual of those glimmering myriads the whole assemblage of which cannot dissipate and can scarcely alleviate the midnight darkness of our world. These stars are visible to us, not because the sun shines upon them, but because they shine of themselves, because they are so many luminous bodies scattered over the tracts of immensity—in a word, because they are so many suns, each throned in the centre of his own dominions, and pouring a flood of light over his own portion of these unlimitable regions.

At such an immense distance for observation, it is not to be supposed, that we can collect many points of resemblance between the fixed stars, and the solar star which forms the centre of our planetary system. There is one point of resemblance, however, which has not escaped the penetration of our astronomers. We know that our sun turns round upon himself in a regular period of time. We also know that there are dark spots scattered over his surface, which, though invisible to the naked eye, are perfectly noticeable by our instruments. If these spots existed in greater quantity upon one side than upon another, it would have the general effect of making that side darker; and the revolution of the sun must, in such a case, give us a brighter and a fainter side, by regular alternations. Now, there are some of the fixed stars which present this appearance. They present us with periodical variations of light. From the splendour of a star of the first or second magnitude, they fade away into some of the inferior magnitudes—and one, by becoming invisible, might give reason to apprehend that we had lost him altogether—but we can still recognise him by the telescope, till at length he reappears in his own place, and, after a regular lapse of so many days and hours, recovers his original brightness. Now, the fair inference from this is,



that the fixed stars, as they resemble our sun in being so many luminous masses of immense magnitude, resemble him in this also, that each of them turns round upon his own axis; so that if any of them should have an inequality in the brightness of their sides, this revolution is rendered evident, by the regular variations in the degree of light which it undergoes.

Shall we say, then, of these vast luminaries, that they were created in vain? Were they called into existence for no other purpose than to throw a tide of useless splendour over the solitudes of immensity? Our sun is only one of these luminaries, and we know that he has worlds in his train. Why should we strip the rest of this princely attendance? Why may not each of them be the centre of his own system, and give light to his own worlds? It is true that we see them not; but could the eye of man take its flight into those distant regions, it would lose sight of our little world before it reached the outer limits of our system—the greater planets would disappear in their turn before it had described a small portion of that abyss which separates us from the fixed stars; the sun would decline into a little spot, and all its splendid retinue of worlds be lost in the obscurity of distance—he would at last shrink into a small indivisible atom, and all that could be seen of this magnificent system, would be reduced to the glimmering of a little star. Why resist any longer the grand and interesting conclusion? Each of these stars may be the token of a system as vast and as splendid as the one which we inhabit. Worlds roll in these distant regions; and these worlds must be the mansions of life and of intelligence. In yon gilded canopy of heaven, we see the broad aspect of the universe, where each shining point presents us with a sun, and each sun with a system of worlds—where the Divinity reigns in all the grandeur of His attributes—where He peoples immensity with His wonders; and travels in the greatness of His strength through the dominions of one vast and unlimited monarchy.

The contemplation has no limits. If we ask the number of suns and of systems, the unassisted eye of man can take in a thousand, and the best telescope which the genius of man has constructed can take in eighty millions. But why subject the dominions of the universe to the eye of man, or to the powers of his genius? Fancy may take its flight far beyond the ken of eye or of telescope. It may expatiate in the outer regions of all that is visible—and shall we have the boldness to say, that there

is nothing there? that the wonders of the Almighty are at an end, because we can no longer trace His footsteps? that His omnipotence is exhausted, because human art can no longer follow Him? that the creative energy of God has sunk into repose, because the imagination is enfeebled by the magnitude of its efforts, and can keep no longer on the wing through those mighty tracts, which shoot far beyond what eye hath seen, or the heart of man hath conceived—which sweep endlessly along, and merge into an awful and mysterious infinity?

Before bringing to a close this rapid and imperfect sketch of our modern astronomy, it may be right to advert to two points of interesting speculation, both of which serve to magnify our conceptions of the universe, and, of course, to give us a more affecting sense of the comparative insignificance of this our world. The first is suggested by the consideration, that if a body be struck in the direction of its centre, it obtains, from this impulse, a progressive motion, but without any movement of revolution being at the same time impressed upon it. It simply goes forward, but does not turn round upon itself. But, again, should the stroke not be in the direction of the centre—should the line which joins the point of percussion to the centre, make an angle with that line in which the impulse was communicated, then the body is both made to go forward in space, and also to wheel upon its axis. In this way, each of our planets may have had its compound motion communicated to it by one single impulse; and, on the other hand, if ever the rotatory motion be communicated by one blow, then the progressive motion must go along with it. In order to have the first motion without the second, there must be a twofold force applied to the body in opposite directions. It must be set a-going in the same way as a spinning-top, so as to revolve about an axis, and to keep unchanged its situation in space. The planets have both motions; and, therefore, may have received them by one and the same impulse. The sun, we are certain, has one of these motions. He has a movement of revolution. If spun round his axis by two opposite forces, one on each side of him, he may have this movement, and retain an inflexible position in space. But if this movement was given him by one stroke, he must have a progressive motion along with a whirling motion; or, in other words, he is moving forward, he is describing a tract in space; and in so doing, he carries all his planets and all their secondaries along with him.

But at this stage of the argument, the matter only remains a

conjectural point of speculation. The sun may have had his rotation impressed upon him by a spinning impulse; or, without recurring to secondary causes at all, this movement may be coeval with his being, and he may have derived both the one and the other from an immediate fiat of the Creator. But there is an actually observed phenomenon of the heavens, which advances the conjecture into a probability. In the course of ages, the stars in one quarter of the celestial sphere are apparently receding from each other; and, in the opposite quarter, they are apparently drawing nearer to each other. If the sun be approaching the former quarter, and receding from the latter, this phenomenon admits of an easy explanation; and we are furnished with a magnificent step in the scale of the Creator's workmanship. In the same manner as the planets, with their satellites, revolve round the sun, may the sun, with all his tributaries, be moving, in common with other stars, around some distant centre, from which there emanates an influence to bind and to subordinate them all. They may be kept from approaching each other by a centrifugal force; without which the laws of attraction might consolidate into one stupendous mass all the distinct globes of which the universe is composed. Our sun may, therefore, be only one member of a higher family—taking his part, along with millions of others, in some loftier system of mechanism by which they are all subjected to one law and to one arrangement—describing the sweep of such an orbit in space, and completing the mighty revolution in such a period of time, as to reduce our planetary seasons and our planetary movements to a very humble and fractionary rank in the scale of a higher astronomy. There is room for all this in immensity, and there is even argument for all this in the records of actual observation; and from the whole of this speculation do we gather a new emphasis to the lesson, how minute is the place, and how secondary is the importance of our world, amid the glories of such a surrounding magnificence.

But there is still another very interesting track of speculation which has been opened up to us by the more recent observations of astronomy. What we allude to, is the discovery of the *nebulae*. We allow that it is but a dim and indistinct light which this discovery has thrown upon the structure of the universe; but still it has spread before the eye of the mind a field of very wide and lofty contemplation. Anterior to this discovery, the universe might appear to have been composed of an indefinite

number of suns, about equidistant from each other, uniformly scattered over space, and each encompassed by such a planetary attendance as takes place in our own system. But we have now reason to think, that instead of lying uniformly, and in a state of equidistance from each other, they are arranged into distinct clusters—that in the same manner as the distance of the nearest fixed stars so inconceivably superior to that of our planets from each other, marks the separation of the solar systems, so the distance of two contiguous clusters may be so inconceivably superior to the reciprocal distance of those fixed stars which belong to the same cluster, as to mark an equally distinct separation of the clusters, and to constitute each of them an individual member of some higher and more extended arrangement. This carries us upwards through another ascending step in the scale of magnificence, and there leaves us in the uncertainty, whether even here the wonderful progression is ended; and, at all events, fixes the assured conclusion in our minds, that, to an eye which could spread itself over the whole, the mansion which accommodates our species, might be so very small as to lie wrapped in microscopical concealment; and in reference to the only Being who possesses this universal eye, well might we say, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou shouldest deign to visit him?”

—And, after all, though it be a mighty and difficult conception, yet who can question it? What is seen may be nothing to what is unseen: for what is seen is limited by the range of our instruments. What is unseen has no limit; and though all which the eye of man can take in, or his fancy can grasp, were swept away, there might still remain as ample a field over which the Divinity may expatiate, and which He may have peopled with innumerable worlds. If the whole visible creation were to disappear, it would leave a solitude behind it—but to the Infinite Mind that can take in the whole system of nature, this solitude might be nothing; a small unoccupied point in that immensity which surrounds it, and which He may have filled with the wonders of His omnipotence. Though this earth were to be burned up, though the trumpet of its dissolution were sounded, though yon sky were to pass away as a scroll, and every visible glory which the finger of the Divinity has inscribed on it, were to be put out for ever—an event so awful to us and to every world in our vicinity, by which so many suns would be extinguished, and so many varied scenes of life and of population

would rush into forgetfulness—what is it in the high scale of the Almighty's workmanship?—a mere shred, which though scattered into nothing, would leave the universe of God one entire scene of greatness and of majesty. Though this earth and these heavens were to disappear, there are other worlds which roll afar: the light of other suns shines upon them, and the sky which mantles them is garnished with other stars. Is it presumption to say, that the moral world extends to these distant and unknown regions; that they are occupied with people; that the charities of home and of neighbourhood flourish there; that the praises of God are there lifted up, and His goodness rejoiced in; that piety has there its temples and its offerings; and the richness of the divine attributes is there felt and admired by intelligent worshippers?

And what is this world in the immensity which teems with them—and what are they who occupy it? The universe at large would suffer as little, in its splendour and variety, by the destruction of our planet, as the verdure and sublime magnitude of a forest would suffer by the fall of a single leaf. The leaf quivers on the branch which supports it. It lies at the mercy of the slightest accident. A breath of wind tears it from its stem, and it lights on the stream of water which passes underneath. In a moment of time, the life which we know, by the microscope, it teems with, is extinguished; and an occurrence so insignificant in the eye of man, and on the scale of his observation, carries in it, to the myriads which people this little leaf, an event as terrible and as decisive as the destruction of a world. Now, on the grand scale of the universe, we, the occupiers of this ball, which performs its little round among the suns and the systems that astronomy has unfolded—we may feel the same littleness and the same insecurity. We differ from the leaf only in this circumstance, that it would require the operation of greater elements to destroy us. But these elements exist. The fire which rages within, may lift its devouring energy to the surface of our planet, and transform it into one wide and wasting volcano. The sudden formation of elastic matter in the bowels of the earth—and it lies within the agency of known substances to accomplish this—may explode it into fragments. The exhalation of noxious air from below may impart a virulence to the air that is around us; it may affect the delicate proportion of its ingredients; and the whole of animated nature may wither and die under the malignity of a

tainted atmosphere. A blazing comet may cross this fated planet in its orbit, and realize all the terrors which superstition has conceived of it. We cannot anticipate with precision the consequences of an event which every astronomer must know to lie within the limits of chance and probability. It may hurry our globe towards the sun—or drag it to the outer regions of the planetary system—or give it a new axis of revolution: and the effect, which I shall simply announce, without explaining it, would be to change the place of the ocean, and bring another mighty flood upon our islands and continents. These are changes which may happen in a single instant of time, and against which nothing known in the present system of things provides us with any security. They might not annihilate the earth, but they would unpeuple it; and we who tread its surface with such firm and assured footsteps, are at the mercy of devouring elements, which, if let loose upon us by the hand of the Almighty, would spread solitude and silence and death over the dominions of the world.

Now, it is this littleness, and this insecurity, which make the protection of the Almighty so dear to us, and bring, with such emphasis, to every pious bosom, the holy lessons of humility and gratitude. The God who sitteth above, and presides in high authority over all worlds, is mindful of man; and though at this moment His energy is felt in the remotest provinces of creation, we may feel the same security in His providence, as if we were the objects of His undivided care. It is not for us to bring our minds up to this mysterious agency. But such is the incomprehensible fact, that the same Being, whose eye is abroad over the whole universe, gives vegetation to every blade of grass, and motion to every particle of blood which circulates through the veins of the minutest animal; that though His mind takes into its comprehensive grasp, immensity and all its wonders, I am as much known to Him as if I were the single object of His attention—that He marks all my thoughts—that He gives birth to every feeling and every movement within me—and that with an exercise of power which I can neither describe nor comprehend, the same God who sits in the highest heaven, and reigns over the glories of the firmament, is at my right hand to give me every breath which I draw, and every comfort which I enjoy.

But this very reflection has been appropriated to the use of Infidelity, and the very language of the text has been made to

bear an application of hostility to the faith. "What is man, that God should be mindful of him? or the son of man, that he should deign to visit him?" Is it likely, says the infidel, that God would send His eternal Son to die for the puny occupiers of so insignificant a province in the mighty field of His creation? Are we the befitting objects of so great and so signal an interposition? Does not the largeness of that field which astronomy lays open to the view of modern science, throw a suspicion over the truth of the gospel history? and how shall we reconcile the greatness of that wonderful movement which was made in heaven for the redemption of fallen man, with the comparative meanness and obscurity of our species?

This is a popular argument against Christianity, not much dwelt upon in books, but, we believe, a good deal insinuated in conversation, and having no small influence on the amateurs of a superficial philosophy. At all events, it is right that every such argument should be met and manfully confronted; nor do we know a more discreditable surrender of our religion, than to act as if she had anything to fear from the ingenuity of her most accomplished adversaries. The author of the following treatise engages in his present undertaking under the full impression that a something may be found with which to combat Infidelity in all its forms; that the truth of God and of His message admits of a noble and decisive manifestation, through every mist which the pride or the prejudice or the sophistry of man may throw around it; and elevated as the wisdom of him may be who has ascended the heights of science, and poured the light of demonstration over the most wondrous of nature's mysteries, that even out of his own principles it may be proved, how much more elevated is the wisdom of him who sits with the docility of a little child to his Bible, and casts down to its authority all his lofty imaginations.

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#### SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITIES.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.—Gen. i. 1.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.—Gen. ii. 1.

Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.—Deut. x. 14.

There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.—Deut. xxxiii. 26.

And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.—2 Kings xix. 15.

For all the gods of the people are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.—1 Chron. xvi. 26.

Thou, even thou, art Lord alone: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein; and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.—Neh. ix. 6.

Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.—Job ix. 8, 9.

He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.—Job xxvi. 7.

By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens.—Job xxvi. 13.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work.—Psalm xix. 1.

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.—Psalm xxxiii. 6.

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands.—Psalm cii. 25.

Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment; who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.—Psalm civ. 2.

He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down.—Psalm civ. 19.

Ye are blessed of the Lord, which made heaven and earth. The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.—Psalm cxv. 15, 16.

My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.—Psalm cxxi. 2.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.—Psalm cxxiv. 8.

The Lord, that made heaven and earth, bless thee out of Zion.—Psalm cxxxiv. 3.

Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is.—Psalm cxlvi. 6.

The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.—Prov. iii. 19.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?—Isa. xl. 12.

It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.—Isa. xl. 22.

Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein.—Isa. xlii. 5.

Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.—Isa. xlv. 24.

I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.—Isa. xlv. 12.

For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth, and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.—Isa. xlv. 18.

Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together.—Isa. xlviii. 13.

He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.—Jer. x. 12.

Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.—Jer. xxxii. 17.



He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.—Jer. li. 15.

It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth ; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth : The Lord is his name.—Amos ix. 6.

We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.—Acts xiv. 15.

God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.—Heb. i. 2.

Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.—Heb. i. 10.

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God.—1Ieb. xi. 3.

## DISCOURSE II.

## THE MODESTY OF TRUE SCIENCE.

“And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.”—1 CORINTHIANS viii. 2.

T15HERE is much profound and important wisdom in that proverb of Solomon, where it is said that “the heart knoweth its own bitterness.” It forms part of a truth still more comprehensive, that every man knoweth his own peculiar feelings and difficulties and trials, far better than he can get any of his neighbours to perceive them. It is natural to us all, that we should desire to engross, to the uttermost, the sympathy of others with what is most painful to the sensibilities of our own bosom, and with what is most aggravating in the hardships of our own situation. But, labour as we may, we cannot, with every power of expression, make an adequate conveyance, as it were, of all our sensations, and of all our circumstances, into another’s understanding. There is a something in the intimacy of a man’s own experience, which he cannot make to pass entire into the heart and mind even of his most familiar companion,—and thus it is, that he is so often defeated in his attempts to obtain a full and a cordial possession of his sympathy. He is mortified, and he wonders at the obtuseness of the people around him—and that he cannot get them to enter into the justness of his complainings—nor to feel the point upon which turn the truth and the reason of his remonstrances—nor to give their interested attention to the case of his peculiarities and of his wrongs—nor to kindle, in generous resentment, along with him, when he starts the topic of his indignation. He does not reflect, all the while, that with every human being he addresses, there is an inner man which forms a theatre of passions and of interests as busy, as crowded, and as fitted as his own to engross the anxious and the exercised feelings of a heart which can alone understand its own bitterness, and lay a correct estimate on the burden of its own visitations. Every man we meet carries about with him,

in the unperceived solitude of his bosom, a little world of his own—and we are just as blind, and as insensible, and as dull, both of perception and of sympathy, about his engrossing objects, as he is about ours; and did we suffer this observation to have all its weight, it might serve to make us more candid and more considerate of others. It might serve to abate the monopolizing selfishness of our nature. It might serve to soften down all the malignity which comes out of those envious contemplations that we are so apt to cast on the fancied ease and prosperity which are around us. It might serve to reconcile every man to his own lot, and dispose him to bear with thankfulness his own burden; and if this train of sentiment were prosecuted with firmness and calmness and impartiality, it would lead to the conclusion, that each profession in life has its own peculiar pains, and its own besetting inconveniences—that from the very bottom of society up to the 'golden pinnacle which blazons upon its summit, there is much in the shape of care and of suffering to be found—that throughout all the conceivable varieties of human condition, there are trials which can neither be adequately told on the one side, nor fully understood on the other—that the ways of God to man are as equal in this as in every department of His administration—and that, go to whatever quarter of human experience we may, we shall find that he has provided enough to exercise the patience and to accomplish the purposes of a wise and a salutary discipline upon all His children.

I have brought forward this observation, that it may prepare the way for a second. There are perhaps no two sets of human beings who comprehend less the movements and enter less into the cares and concerns of each other, than the wide and busy public on the one hand, and on the other, those men of close and studious retirement, whom the world never hears of, save when, from their thoughtful solitude, there issues forth some splendid discovery to set the world on a gaze of admiration. Then will the brilliancy of a superior genius draw every eye towards it—and the homage paid to intellectual superiority will place its idol on a loftier eminence than all wealth or than all titles can bestow—and the name of the successful philosopher will circulate, in his own age, over the whole extent of civilized society, and be borne down to posterity in the characters of ever-during remembrance: and thus it is, that, when we look back on the days of Newton, we annex a kind of mysterious

greatness to him, who, by the pure force of his understanding, rose to such a gigantic elevation above the level of ordinary men—and the kings and warriors of other days sink into insignificance around him—and he, at this moment, stands forth to the public eye, in a prouder array of glory than circles the memory of all the men of former generations—and while all the vulgar grandeur of other days is now mouldering in forgetfulness, the achievements of our great astronomer are still fresh in the veneration of his countrymen, and they carry him forward on the stream of time, with a reputation ever gathering, and the triumphs of a distinction that will never die.

Now, the point that I want to impress upon you is, that the same public, who are so dazzled and overborne by the lustre of all this superiority, are utterly in the dark as to what that is which confers its chief merit on the philosophy of Newton. They see the result of his labours, but they know not how to appreciate the difficulty or the extent of them. They look on the stately edifice he has reared, but they know not what he had to do in settling the foundation which gives to it all its stability; nor are they aware what painful encounters he had to make, both with the natural predilections of his own heart, and with the prejudices of others, when employed on the work of laying together its unperishing materials. They have never heard of the controversies which this man, of peaceful unambitious modesty, had to sustain with all that was proud and all that was intolerant in the philosophy of the age. They have never in thought, entered that closet which was the scene of his patient and profound exercises—nor have they gone along with him, as he gave his silent hours to the labours of the midnight oil, and plied that unwearied task to which the charm of lofty contemplation had allured him—nor have they accompanied him through all the workings of that wonderful mind, from which, as from the recesses of a laboratory, there came forth such gleams and processes of thought as shed an effulgency over the whole amplitude of nature. All this the public have not done; for of this the great majority, even of the reading and cultivated public, are utterly incapable; and therefore is it that they need to be told what that is, in which the main distinction of his philosophy lies; that when labouring in other fields of investigation, they may know how to borrow from his safe example, and how to profit by that superior wisdom which marked the whole conduct of his understanding.

Let it be understood then, that they are the positive discoveries of Newton, which in the eye of a superficial public confer upon him all his reputation. He discovered the mechanism of the planetary system. He discovered the composition of light. He discovered the cause of those alternate movements which take place on the waters of the ocean. These form his actual and his visible achievements. These are what the world look to as the monuments of his greatness. These are doctrines by which he has enriched the field of philosophy; and thus it is, that the whole of his merit is supposed to lie in having had the sagacity to perceive, and the vigour to lay hold of the proofs, which conferred upon these doctrines all the establishment of a most rigid and conclusive demonstration.

But while he gets all his credit, and all his admiration for those articles of science which he has added to the creed of philosophers, he deserves as much credit and admiration for those articles which he kept out of this creed, as for those which he introduced into it. It was the property of his mind that it kept a tenacious hold of every one position which had proof to substantiate it: but it forms a property equally characteristic, and which, in fact, gives its leading peculiarity to the whole spirit and style of his investigations, that he put a most determined exclusion on every one position that was destitute of such proof. He would not admit the astronomical theories of those who went before him, because they had no proof. He would not give in to their notions about the planets wheeling their rounds in whirlpools of ether—for he did not see this ether—he had no proof of its existence: and, besides, even supposing it to exist, it would not have impressed on the heavenly bodies such movements as met his observation. He would not submit his judgment to the reigning systems of the day—for, though they had authority to recommend them, they had no proof; and thus it is, that he evinced the strength and the soundness of his philosophy, as much by his decisions, upon those doctrines of science which he rejected, as by his demonstration of those doctrines of science which he was the first to propose, and which now stand out to the eye of posterity as the only monuments to the force and superiority of his understanding.

He wanted no other recommendation for any one article of science, than the recommendation of evidence—and with this recommendation he opened to it the chamber of his mind, though authority scowled upon it, and taste was disgusted by it, and

fashion was ashamed of it, and all the beauteous speculation of former days was cruelly broken up by this new announcement of the better philosophy, and scattered like the fragments of an aerial vision, over which the past generations of the world had been slumbering their profound and their pleasing reverie. But, on the other hand, should the article of science want the recommendation of evidence, he shut against it all the avenues of his understanding; and though all antiquity lent their suffrages to it, and all eloquence had thrown around it the most attractive brilliancy, and all habit had incorporated it with every system of every seminary in Europe, and all fancy had arrayed it in graces of the most tempting solicitation—yet was the steady and inflexible mind of Newton proof against this whole weight of authority and allurements, and casting his cold and unwelcome look at the specious plausibility, he rebuked it from his presence. The strength of his philosophy lay as much in refusing admittance to that which wanted evidence, as in giving a place and an occupancy to that which possessed it. In that march of intellect which led him onwards through the rich and magnificent field of his discoveries, he pondered every step; and while he advanced with a firm and assured movement, wherever the light of evidence carried him, he never suffered any glare of imagination or of prejudice to seduce him from his path.

Certain it is, that, in the prosecution of his wonderful career, he found himself on a way beset with temptation upon every side of him. It was not merely that he had the reigning taste and philosophy of the times to contend with; but he expatiated on a lofty region, where, in all the giddiness of success, he might have met with much to solicit his fancy, and tempt him to some devious speculation. Had he been like the majority of other men, he would have broken free from the fetters of a sober and chastised understanding, and, giving wing to his imagination, had done what philosophers have done after him—been carried away by some meteor of their own forming, or found their amusement in some of their own intellectual pictures, or palmed some loose and confident plausibilities of their own upon the world. But Newton stood true to his principle, that he would take up with nothing which wanted evidence, and he kept by his demonstrations, and his measurements, and his proofs; and if it be true that he who ruleth his own spirit is greater than he who taketh a city, there was won, in the solitude of his chamber, many a repeated victory over himself,

which should give a brighter lustre to his name than all the conquests he has made on the field of discovery, or than all the splendour of his positive achievements.

I trust you understand, that, though it be one of the maxims of the true philosophy, never to shrink from a doctrine which has evidence on its side, it is another maxim, equally essential to it, never to harbour any doctrine when this evidence is wanting. Take these two maxims along with you, and you will be at no loss to explain the peculiarity which, more than any other, goes both to characterize and to ennoble the philosophy of Newton. What I allude to is, the precious combination of its strength and of its modesty. On the one hand, what greater evidence of strength than the fulfilment of that mighty enterprise, by which the heavens have been made its own, and the mechanism of unnumbered worlds has been brought within the grasp of the human understanding? Now, it was by walking in the light of sound and competent evidence, that all this was accomplished. It was by the patient, the strenuous, the unfaltering application of the legitimate instruments of discovery. It was by touching that which was tangible, and looking to that which was visible, and computing that which was measurable, and, in one word, by making a right and reasonable use of all that proof which the field of nature around us has brought within the limit of sensible observation. This is the arena on which the modern philosophy has won all her victories, and fulfilled all her wondrous achievements, and reared all her proud and enduring monuments, and gathered all her magnificent trophies, to that power of intellect with which the hand of a bounteous Heaven has so richly gifted the constitution of our species.

But, on the other hand, go beyond the limits of sensible observation, and from that moment the genuine disciples of this enlightened school cast all their confidence and all their intrepidity away from them. Keep them on the firm ground of experiment, and none more bold and more decisive in their announcements of all that they have evidence for—but, off this ground none more humble, or more cautious of anything like positive announcements, than they. They choose neither to know, nor to believe, nor to assert, where evidence is wanting; and they will sit, with all the patience of a scholar to his task, till they have found it. They are utter strangers to that haughty confidence with which some philosophers of the day sport the plausibilities of unauthorized speculation, and by which,

unmindful of the limit that separates the region of sense from the region of conjecture, they make their blind and their impetuous inroads into a province which does not belong to them. There is no one object to which the exercised mind of a true Newtonian disciple is more familiarized than this limit, and it serves as a boundary by which he shapes, and bounds, and regulates all the enterprises of his philosophy. All the space which lies within this limit he cultivates to the uttermost; and it is by such successive labours, that every year which rolls over the world is witnessing some new contribution to experimental science, and adding to the solidity and aggrandizement of this wonderful fabric. But if true to their own principle, then, in reference to the forbidden ground which lies without this limit, those very men, who, on the field of warranted exertion, evinced all the hardihood and vigour of a full-grown understanding, show, on every subject where the light of evidence is withheld from them, all the modesty of children. They give us positive opinion only when they have indisputable proof—but when they have no such proof, then they have no such opinion. The single principle of their respect to truth secures their homage for every one position where the evidence of truth is present, and at the same time begets an entire diffidence about every one position from which this evidence is disjoined. And thus we may understand how the first man in the accomplishments of philosophy, which the world ever saw, sat at the book of nature in the humble attitude of its interpreter and its pupil—how all the docility of conscious ignorance threw a sweet and softening lustre around the radiance even of his most splendid discoveries: and, while the flippancy of a few superficial acquirements is enough to place a philosopher of the day on the pedestal of his fancied elevation, and to vest him with an assumed lordship over the whole domain of natural and revealed knowledge, we cannot forbear to do honour to the unpretending greatness of Newton, than whom we know not if there ever lighted on the face of our world, one in the character of whose admirable genius so much force and so much humility were more attractively blended.

I now propose to carry you forward, by a few simple illustrations, to the argument of this day. All the sublime truths of the modern astronomy lie within the field of actual observation, and have the firm evidence to rest upon of all that information which is conveyed to us by the avenue of the senses. Sir Isaac Newton never went beyond this field without a reverential im-



pression upon his mind of the precariousness of the ground on which he was standing. On this ground he never ventured a positive affirmation—but, resigning the lofty tone of demonstration, and putting on the modesty of conscious ignorance, he brought forward all he had to say in the humble form of a doubt, or a conjecture, or a question. But what he had not confidence to do, other philosophers have done after him—and they have winged their audacious way into forbidden regions—and they have crossed that circle by which the field of observation is enclosed—and there have they debated and dogmatized with all the pride of a most intolerant assurance.

Now, though the case be imaginary, let us conceive, for the sake of illustration, that one of these philosophers made so extravagant a departure from the sobriety of experimental science, as to pass on from the astronomy of the different planets, and to attempt the natural history of their animal and vegetable kingdoms. He might get hold of some vague and general analogies, to throw an air of plausibility around his speculation. He might pass from the botany of the different regions of the globe that we inhabit, and make his loose and confident applications to each of the other planets, according to its distance from the sun, and the inclination of its axis to the plane of its annual revolution; and out of some such slender materials, he might work up an amusing philosophical romance, full of ingenuity, and having, withal, the colour of truth and of consistency spread over it.

I can conceive how a superficial public might be delighted by the eloquence of such a composition, and even be impressed by its arguments; but were I asked, which is the man of all the ages and countries in the world, who would have the least respect for this treatise upon the plants which grow on the surface of Jupiter, I should be at no loss to answer the question. I should say, that it would be he who had computed the motions of Jupiter—that it would be he who had measured the bulk and the density of Jupiter—that it would be he who had estimated the periods of Jupiter—that it would be he whose observant eye and patiently calculating mind, had traced the satellites of Jupiter through all the rounds of their mazy circulation, and unravelled the intricacy of all their movements. He would see at once that the subject lay at a hopeless distance beyond the field of legitimate observation. It would be quite enough for him that it was beyond the range of his telescope. On this

ground, and on this ground only, would he reject it as one of the puniest imbecilities of childhood. As to any character of truth or of importance, it would have no more effect on such a mind as that of Newton, than any illusion of poetry; and from the eminence of his intellectual throne, would he cast a penetrating glance at the whole speculation, and bid its gaudy insignificance away from him.

But let us pass onward to another case, which, though as imaginary as the former, may still serve the purpose of illustration.

This same adventurous philosopher may be conceived to shift his speculation from the plants of another world, to the character of its inhabitants. He may avail himself of some slender correspondencies between the heat of the sun and the moral temperament of the people it shines upon. He may work up a theory, which carries on the front of it some of the characters of plausibility; but surely it does not require the philosophy of Newton to demonstrate the folly of such an enterprise. There is not a man of plain understanding, who does not perceive that this ambitious inquirer has got without his reach—that he has stepped beyond the field of experience, and is now expatiating on the field of imagination—that he has ventured on a dark unknown, where the wisest of all philosophy is the philosophy of silence, and a profession of ignorance is the best evidence of a solid understanding—that if he thinks he knows anything on such a subject as this, “he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.” He knows not what Newton knew, and what he kept a steady eye upon throughout the whole march of his sublime investigations. He knows not the limit of his own faculties. He has overleaped the barrier which hems in all the possibilities of human attainment. He has wantonly flung himself off from the safe and firm field of observation, and got on that undiscoverable ground, where, by every step he takes, he widens his distance from the true philosophy, and by every affirmation he utters, he rebels against the authority of all its maxims.

I can conceive it to be your feeling, that I have hitherto indulged in a vain expense of argument, and it is most natural for you to put the question, “What is the precise point of convergence to which I am directing all the light of this abundant and seemingly superfluous illustration?”

In the astronomical objection which Infidelity has proposed against the truth of the Christian revelation, there is first an

assertion, and then an argument. The assertion is, that Christianity is set up for the exclusive benefit of our minute and solitary world. The argument is, that God would not lavish such a quantity of attention on so insignificant a field. Even though the assertion were admitted, I should have a quarrel with the argument. But the futility of the objection is not laid open in all its extent, unless we expose the utter want of all essential evidence even for the truth of the assertion. How do infidels know that Christianity is set up for the single benefit of this earth and its inhabitants? How are they able to tell us, that if you go to other planets, the person and the religion of Jesus are there unknown to them? We challenge them to the proof of this announcement. We see in this objection the same rash and gratuitous procedure, which was so apparent in the two cases that we have already advanced for the purpose of illustration. We see in it the same glaring transgression on the spirit and the maxims of that very philosophy which they profess to idolize. They have made their argument against us, out of an assertion which has positively no ascertained fact to rest upon—an assertion which they have no means whatever of verifying—an assertion, the truth or the falsehood of which can only be gathered out of some supernatural message, for it lies completely beyond the range of human observation. It is willingly admitted, that by an attempt at the botany of other worlds, the true method of philosophizing is trampled on; for this is a subject that lies beyond the range of actual observation, and every performance upon it must be made up of assertions without proofs. It is also willingly admitted, that an attempt at the civil and political history of their people, would be an equally extravagant departure from the spirit of the true philosophy; for this also lies beyond the field of actual observation; and all that could possibly be mustered up on such a subject as this, would still be assertions without proofs. Now, the theology of these planets is, in every way, as inaccessible a subject as their politics or their natural history; and therefore it is, that the objection, grounded on the confident assumption of those infidel astronomers, who assert Christianity to be the religion of this one world, or that the religion of these other worlds is not our very Christianity, can have no influence on a mind that has derived its habits of thinking from the pure and rigorous school of Newton; for the whole of this assertion is just as glaringly destitute of proof as in the two former instances.

The man who could embark in an enterprise so foolish and so fanciful, as to theorize on the details of the botany of another world, or to theorize on the natural and moral history of its people, is just making as outrageous a departure from all sense, and all science, and all sobriety, when he presumes to speculate or to assert on the details or the methods of God's administration among its rational and accountable inhabitants. He wings his fancy to as hazardous a region, and vainly strives a penetrating vision through the mantle of as deep an obscurity. All the elements of such a speculation are hidden from him. For anything he can tell, sin has found its way into these other worlds. For anything he can tell, their people have banished themselves from communion with God. For anything he can tell, many a visit has been made to each of them, on the subject of our common Christianity, by commissioned messengers from the throne of the Eternal. For anything he can tell, the redemption proclaimed to us is not one solitary instance, or not the whole of that redemption which is by the Son of God—but only our part in a plan of mercy, equal in magnificence to all that astronomy has brought within the range of human contemplation. For anything he can tell, the moral pestilence, which walks abroad over the face of our world, may have spread its desolations over all the planets of all the systems which the telescope has made known to us. For anything he can tell, some mighty redemption has been devised in heaven, to meet this disaster in the whole extent and malignity of its visitations. For anything he can tell, the wonder-working God, who has strewed the field of immensity with so many worlds, and spread the shelter of His omnipotence over them, may have sent a message of love to each, and re-assured the hearts of its despairing people by some overpowering manifestation of tenderness. For anything he can tell, angels from paradise may have sped to every planet their delegated way, and sung, from each azure canopy, a joyful annunciation, and said, "Peace be to this residence, and good-will to all its families, and glory to Him in the highest, who, from the eminency of His throne, has issued an act of grace so magnificent, as to carry the tidings of life and of acceptance to the unnumbered orbs of a sinful creation." For anything he can tell, the Eternal Son, of whom it is said, that by Him the worlds were created, may have had the government of many sinful worlds laid upon His shoulders; and by the power of His mysterious word, have awoke them all from that

spiritual death, to which they had sunk in lethargy as profound as the slumbers of non-existence. For anything he can tell, the one Spirit who moved on the face of the waters, and whose presiding influence it was that hushed the wild war of nature's elements, and made a beauteous system emerge out of its disjointed materials, may now be working with the fragments of another chaos; and educing order, and obedience, and harmony, out of the wrecks of a moral rebellion, which reaches through all these spheres, and spreads disorder to the uttermost limits of our astronomy.

But here I stop—nor shall I attempt to grope further my dark and fatiguing way, among such sublime and mysterious secrecies. It is not I who am offering to lift this curtain. It is not I who am pitching my adventurous flight to the secret things which belong to God, away from the things that are revealed, and which belong to us and to our children. It is the champion of that very Infidelity which I am now combating. It is he who props his unchristian argument by presumptions fetched out of those untravelled obscurities which lie on the other side of a barrier that I pronounce to be impassable. It is he who transgresses the limits which Newton forbore to enter; because, with a justness which reigns throughout all his inquiries, he saw the limit of his own understanding, nor would he venture himself beyond it. It is he who has borrowed from the philosophy of this wondrous man a few dazzling conceptions, which have only served to bewilder him—while, an utter stranger to the spirit of this philosophy, he has carried a daring and an ignorant speculation far beyond the boundary of its prescribed and allowable enterprises. It is he who has mustered against the truths of the Gospel, resting as it does on evidence within the reach of his faculties, an objection, for the truth of which he has no evidence whatever. It is he who puts away from him a doctrine, for which he has the substantial and the familiar proof of human testimony; and substitutes in its place a doctrine, for which he can get no other support than from a reverie of his own imagination. It is he who turns aside from all that safe and certain argument, that is supplied by the history of this world, of which he knows something; and who loses himself in the work of theorizing about other worlds, of the moral and theological history of which he positively knows nothing. Upon him and not upon us, lies the folly of launching his impetuous way beyond the province of observa-

tion—of letting his fancy afloat among the unknown of distant and mysterious regions—and, by an act of daring, as impious as it is unphilosophical, of trying to unwrap that shroud, which, till drawn aside by the hand of a messenger from heaven, will ever veil from human eye the purposes of the Eternal.

If you have gone along with us in the preceding observations, you will perceive how they are calculated to disarm of all its point, and of all its energy, that flippancy of Voltaire, when, in the examples he gives of the dotage of the human understanding, he tells us of Bacon having believed in witchcraft, and Sir Isaac Newton having written a commentary on the Book of Revelation. The former instance we shall not undertake to vindicate; but, in the latter instance, we perceive what this brilliant and specious but withal superficial apostle of Infidelity, either did not see, or refused to acknowledge. We see in this intellectual labour of our great philosopher, the working of the very same principles which carried him through the profoundest and the most successful of his investigations; and how he kept most sacredly and most consistently by those very maxims, the authority of which he, even in the full vigour and manhood of his faculties, ever recognised. We see in the theology of Newton, the very spirit and principle which gave all its stability, and all its sureness, to the philosophy of Newton. We see the same tenacious adherence to every one doctrine, that had such valid proof to uphold it, as could be gathered from the field of human experience; and we see the same firm resistance of every one argument, that had nothing to recommend it, but such plausibilities as could easily be devised by the genius of man, when he expatiated abroad on those fields of creation which the eye never witnessed, and from which no messenger ever came to us with any credible information. Now, it was on the former of these two principles that Newton clung so determinedly to his Bible, as the record of an actual annunciation from God to the inhabitants of this world. When he turned his attention to this book, he came to it with a mind tutored to the philosophy of facts—and when he looked at its credentials, he saw the stamp and the impress of this philosophy on every one of them. He saw the fact of Christ being a messenger from heaven, in the audible language by which it was conveyed from heaven's canopy to human ears. He saw the fact of his being an approved ambassador of God, in those miracles which carried their own resistless evidence along with them to human eyes. He saw

the truth of this whole history brought home to his own conviction, by a sound and substantial vehicle of human testimony. He saw the reality of that supernatural light, which inspired the prophecies he himself illustrated, by such an agreement with the events of a various and distant futurity as could be taken cognisance of by human observation. He saw the wisdom of God pervading the whole substance of the written message, in such manifold adaptations to the circumstances of man, and to the whole secrecy of his thoughts, and his affections, and his spiritual wants, and his moral sensibilities, as even in the mind of an ordinary and unlettered peasant, can be attested by human consciousness. These formed the solid materials of the basis on which our experimental philosopher stood; and there was nothing in the whole compass of his own astronomy, to dazzle him away from it; and he was too well aware of the limit between what he knew and what he did not know, to be seduced from the ground he had taken, by any of those brilliancies, which have since led so many of his humbler successors into the track of Infidelity. He had measured the distances of these planets. He had calculated their periods. He had estimated their figures, and their bulk, and their densities, and he had subordinated the whole intricacy of their movements to the simple and sublime agency of one commanding principle. But he had too much of the ballast of a substantial understanding about him, to be thrown afloat by all this success among the plausibilities of wanton and unauthorized speculation. He knew the boundary which hemmed him. He knew that he had not thrown one particle of light on the moral or religious history of these planetary regions. He had not ascertained what visits of communication they received from the God who upholds them. But he knew that the fact of a real visit made to this planet, had such evidence to rest upon, that it was not to be disposed by any aerial imagination. And when I look at the steady and unmoved Christianity of this wonderful man, so far from seeing any symptom of dotage and imbecility, or any forgetfulness of those principles on which the fabric of his philosophy is reared—do I see, that in sitting down to the work of a Bible commentator, he hath given us their most beautiful and most consistent exemplification.

I did not anticipate such a length of time and of illustration in this stage of my argument. But I will not regret it, if I have familiarized the minds of any of my readers to the reigning prin-

inciple of this Discourse. We are strongly disposed to think, that it is a principle which might be made to apply to every argument of every unbeliever—and so to serve not merely as an antidote against the Infidelity of astronomers, but to serve as an antidote against all Infidelity. We are all aware of the diversity of complexion which Infidelity puts on. It looks one thing in the man of science and of liberal accomplishment. It looks another thing in the refined voluptuary. It looks still another thing in the commonplace railer against the artifices of priestly domination. It looks another thing in the dark and unsettled spirit of him, whose every reflection is tinctured with gall, and who casts his envious and malignant scowl at all that stands associated with the established order of society. It looks another thing in the prosperous man of business, who has neither time nor patience for the details of the Christian evidence—but who, amid the hurry of his other occupations, has gathered so many of the lighter petulancies of the infidel writers, and caught from the perusal of them so contemptuous a tone towards the religion of the New Testament, as to set him at large from all the decencies of religious observation, and to give him the disdain of an elevated complacency over all the follies of what he counts a vulgar superstition. And, lastly, for Infidelity has now got down amongst us to the humblest walks of life, may it occasionally be seen lowering on the forehead of the resolute and hardy artificer, who can lift his menacing voice against the priesthood, and, looking on the Bible as a jugglery of theirs, can bid stout defiance to all its denunciations. Now, under all these varieties, we think that there might be detected the one and universal principle which we have attempted to expose. The something, whatever it is, which has dispossessed all these people of their Christianity, exists in their minds, in the shape of a position, which they hold to be true, but which, by no legitimate evidence, they have ever realized—and a position, which lodges within them as a wilful fancy or presumption of their own, but which could not stand the touchstone of that wise and solid principle, in virtue of which the followers of Newton give to observation the precedence over theory. It is a principle altogether worthy of being laboured—as, if carried round in faithful and consistent application amongst these numerous varieties, it is able to break up all the existing Infidelity of the world.

But there is one other most important conclusion to which it carries us. It carries us, with all the docility of children, to



the Bible; and puts us down into the attitude of an unreserved surrender of thought and understanding to its authoritative information. Without the testimony of an authentic messenger from Heaven, I know nothing of Heaven's counsels. I never heard of any moral telescope that can bring to my observation the doings or the deliberations which are taking place in the sanctuary of the Eternal. I may put into the registers of my belief, all that comes home to me through the senses of the outer man, or by the consciousness of the inner man. But neither the one nor the other can tell me of the purposes of God; can tell me of the transactions or the designs of His sublime monarchy; can tell me of the goings forth of Him who is from everlasting unto everlasting; can tell me of the march and the movements of that great administration which embraces all worlds, and takes into its wide and comprehensive survey the mighty roll of innumerable ages. It is true that my fancy may break its impetuous way into this lofty and inaccessible field; and, through the devices of my heart, which are many, the visions of an ever-shifting theology may take their alternate sway over me; but the counsel of the Lord, it shall stand. And I repeat it, that if true to the leading principle of that philosophy which has poured such a flood of light over the mysteries of nature, we shall dismiss every self-formed conception of our own, and wait, in all the humility of conscious ignorance, till the Lord himself shall break His silence, and make His counsel known by an act of communication. And now, that a professed communication is before me, and that it has all the solidity of the experimental evidence on its side, and nothing but the reveries of a daring speculation to oppose it, what is the consistent, what is the rational, what is the philosophical use that should be made of this document, but to set me down like a school-boy to the work of turning its pages and conning its lessons, and submitting the every exercise of my judgment to its information and its testimony? We know that there is a superficial philosophy which casts the glare of a most seducing brilliancy around it; and spurns the Bible, with all the doctrine and all the piety of the Bible, away from it; and has infused the spirit of Antichrist into many of the literary establishments of the age; but it is not the solid, the profound, the cautious spirit of that philosophy which has done so much to ennoble the modern period of our world; for the more that this spirit is cultivated and understood, the more will it be found in

alliance with that spirit in virtue of which all that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God is humbled, and all lofty imaginations are cast down, and every thought of the heart is brought into the captivity of the obedience of Christ.

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SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITIES.

The secret things belong unto the Lord our God ; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.—Deut. xxix. 29.

I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause ; which doeth great things and unsearchable ; marvellous things without number.—Job v. 8, 9.

Which doeth great things past finding out ; yea, and wonders without number.—Job ix. 10.

Canst thou by searching find out God ? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ?—Job xi. 7.

Hast thou heard the secret of God ? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself ?—Job xv. 8.

Lo, these are parts of his ways ; but how little a portion is heard of him ? but the thunder of his power who can understand ?—Job xxvi. 14.

Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.—Job xxxvi. 26.

God thundereth marvellously with his voice : great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.—Job xxxvii. 5.

Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out : he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice.—Job xxxvii. 23.

Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.—Psalm lxxvii. 19.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised ; and his greatness is unsearchable.—Psalm cxlv. 3.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.—Isa. lv. 8, 9.

Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.—Matt. xviii. 3.

Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in nowise enter therein.—Luke xviii. 17.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been his counsellor ?—Rom. xi. 33, 34.

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.—1 Cor. iii. 18.

For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.—Gal. vi. 3.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.—Col. ii. 8.

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.—1 Tim. vi. 20.

## DISCOURSE III.

## ON THE EXTENT OF THE DIVINE CONDESCENSION.

"Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!"—PSALM cxiii. 5, 6.

IN our last Discourse, we attempted to expose the total want of evidence for the assertion of the infidel astronomer—and this reduces the whole of our remaining controversy with him to the business of arguing against a mere possibility. Still, however, the answer is not so complete as it might be, till the soundness of the argument be attended to, as well as the credibility of the assertion—or, in other words, let us admit the assertion, and take a view of the reasoning which has been constructed upon it.

We have already attempted to lay before you the wonderful extent of that space, teeming with unnumbered worlds, which modern science has brought within the circle of its discoveries. We even ventured to expatiate on those tracts of infinity which lie on the other side of all that eye or that telescope hath made known to us—to shoot afar into those ulterior regions which are beyond the limits of our astronomy—to impress you with the rashness of the imagination, that the creative energy of God had sunk exhausted by the magnitude of its efforts, at that very line, through which the art of man, lavished as it has been on the work of perfecting the instruments of vision, has not yet been able to penetrate; and upon all this we hazarded the assertion, that though all these visible heavens were to rush into annihilation, and the besom of the Almighty's wrath were to sweep from the face of the universe those millions and millions more of suns and of systems which lie within the grasp of our actual observation—that this event, which, to our eye, would leave so wide and so dismal a solitude behind it, might be nothing in the eye of Him who could take in the whole, but the

disappearance of a little speck from that field of created things which the hand of His omnipotence had thrown around Him.

But to press home the sentiment of the text, it is not necessary to stretch the imagination beyond the limit of our actual discoveries. It is enough to strike our minds with the insignificance of this world, and of all who inhabit it, to bring it into measurement with that mighty assemblage of worlds which lie open to the eye of man, aided as it has been by the inventions of his genius. When we told you of the eighty millions of suns, each occupying his own independent territory in space, and dispensing his own influences over a cluster of tributary worlds; this world could not fail to sink into littleness in the eye of him who looked to all the magnitude and variety which are around it. We gave you but a feeble image of our comparative insignificance, when we said that the glories of an extended forest would suffer no more from the fall of a single leaf, than the glories of this extended universe would suffer though the globe we tread upon, "and all that it inherits, should dissolve." And when we lift our conceptions to Him who has peopled immensity with all these wonders—who sits enthroned on the magnificence of His own works, and by one sublime idea can embrace the whole extent of that boundless amplitude, which He has filled with the trophies of His Divinity; we cannot but resign our whole heart to the Psalmist's exclamation of "What is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou shouldest deign to visit him!"

Now, mark the use to which all this has been turned by the genius of Infidelity. Such an humble portion of the universe as ours could never have been the object of such high and distinguishing attentions as Christianity has assigned to it. God would not have manifested Himself in the flesh for the salvation of so paltry a world. The monarch of a whole continent would never move from his capital, and lay aside the splendour of royalty, and subject himself for months, or for years, to perils, and poverty, and persecution, and take up his abode in some small islet of his dominions, which, though swallowed by an earthquake, could not be missed amid the glories of so wide an empire; and all this to regain the lost affections of a few families upon its surface. And neither would the eternal Son of God—He who is revealed to us as having made all worlds, and as holding an empire, amid the splendours of which the globe that we inherit is shaded in insignificance; neither would He strip

Himself of the glory He had with the Father before the world was, and light on this lower scene for the purpose imputed to Him in the New Testament. Impossible, that the concerns of this puny ball, which floats its little round among an infinity of larger worlds, should be of such mighty account in the plans of the Eternal, or should have given birth in heaven to so wonderful a movement, as the Son of God putting on the form of our degraded species, and sojourning amongst us, and sharing in all our infirmities, and crowning the whole scene of humiliation by the disgrace and the agonies of a cruel martyrdom.

This has been started as a difficulty in the way of the Christian Revelation; and it is the boast of many of our philosophical Infidels, that, by the light of modern discovery, the light of the New Testament is eclipsed and overborne; and the mischief is not confined to philosophers, for the argument has got into other hands, and the popular illustrations that are now given to the sublimest truths of science, have widely disseminated all the Deism that has been grafted upon it; and the high tone of a decided contempt for the Gospel is now associated with the flippancy of superficial acquirements; and while the venerable Newton, whose genius threw open those mighty fields of contemplation, found a fit exercise for his powers in the interpretation of the Bible, there are thousands and tens of thousands, who, though walking in the light which he holds out to them, are seduced by a complacency which he never felt, and inflated by a pride which never entered into his pious and philosophical bosom, and whose only notice of the Bible is to depreciate, and to deride, and to disown it.

Before entering into what we conceive to be the right answer to this objection, let us previously observe, that it goes to strip the Deity of an attribute which forms a wonderful addition to the glories of His incomprehensible character. It is indeed a mighty evidence of the strength of His arm, that so many millions of worlds are suspended on it; but it would surely make the high attribute of His power more illustrious, if, while it expatiated at large among the suns and the systems of astronomy, it could, at the very same instant, be impressing a movement and a direction on all the minuter wheels of that machinery which is working incessantly around us. It forms a noble demonstration of His wisdom, that He gives unremitting operation to those laws which uphold the stability of this great universe; but it would go to heighten that wisdom inconceiv-

ably, if, while equal to the magnificent task of maintaining the order and harmony of the spheres, it was lavishing its inexhaustible resources on the beauties, and varieties, and arrangements, of every one scene, however humble, of every one field, however narrow, of the creation He had formed. It is a cheering evidence of the delight He takes in communicating happiness, that the whole of immensity should be so strewed with the habitations of life and of intelligence; but it would surely bring home the evidence with a nearer and a more affecting impression to every bosom, did we know, that at the very time His benignant regard took in the mighty circle of created beings, there was not a single family overlooked by Him, and that every individual in every corner of His dominions was as effectually seen to, as if the object of an exclusive and undivided care. It is our imperfection, that we cannot give our attention to more than one object at one and the same instant of time; but surely it would elevate our every idea of the perfections of God, did we know, that while His comprehensive mind could grasp the whole amplitude of nature, to the very outermost of its boundaries, He had an attentive eye fastened on the very humblest of its objects, and pondered every thought of my heart, and noticed every footstep of my goings, and treasured up in His remembrance every turn and every movement of my history.

And, lastly, to apply this train of sentiment to the matter before us, let us suppose that one among the countless myriads of worlds should be visited by a moral pestilence, which spread through all its people, and brought them under the doom of a law whose sanctions were unrelenting and immutable; it were no disparagement to God, should He, by an act of righteous indignation, sweep this offence away from the universe which it deformed—nor should we wonder, though, among the multitude of other worlds, from which the ear of the Almighty was regaled with the songs of praise, and the incense of a pure adoration ascended to His throne, He should leave the strayed and solitary world to perish in the guilt of its rebellion. But, would it not throw the softening of a most exquisite tenderness over the character of God, should we see Him putting forth His every expedient to reclaim to Himself those children who had wandered away from Him—and, few as they were when compared with the host of His obedient worshippers, would it not just impart to His attribute of compassion the infinity of the Godhead, that rather than lose the single world which had turned

to its own way, He should send the messengers of peace to woo and to welcome it back again ; and if justice demanded so mighty a sacrifice, and the law behoved to be so magnified and made honourable, would it not throw a moral sublime over the goodness of the Deity, should He lay upon His own Son the burden of its atonement, that He might again smile upon the world, and hold out the sceptre of invitation to all its families ?

We avow it, therefore, that this infidel argument goes to expunge a perfection from the character of God. The more we know of the extent of nature, should not we have the loftier conception of Him who sits in high authority over the concerns of so wide a universe ? But is it not adding to the bright catalogue of His other attributes, to say, that while magnitude does not overpower Him, minuteness cannot escape Him, and variety cannot bewilder Him, and that at the very time while the mind of the Deity is abroad over the whole vastness of creation, there is not one particle of matter, there is not one individual principle of rational or of animal existence, there is not one single world in that expanse which teems with them, that His eye does not discern as constantly, and His hand does not guide as unerringly, and His spirit does not watch and care for as vigilantly, as if it formed the one and exclusive object of His attention ?

The thing is inconceivable to us, whose minds are so easily distracted by a number of objects, and this is the secret principle of the whole Infidelity I am now alluding to. To bring God to the level of our own comprehension, we would clothe Him in the impotency of a man. We would transfer to His wonderful mind all the imperfection of our own faculties. While we are taught by astronomy, that He has millions of worlds to look after, and thus add in one direction to the glories of His character ; we take away from them in another, by saying, that each of these worlds must be looked after imperfectly. The use that we make of a discovery, which should heighten our every conception of God, and humble us into the sentiment, that a Being of such mysterious elevation is to us unfathomable, is to sit in judgment over Him, and to pronounce such a judgment as degrades Him, and keeps Him down to the standard of our own paltry imagination ! We are introduced by modern science to a multitude of other suns and of other systems ; and the perverse interpretation we put upon the fact, that God *can* diffuse the benefits of His power and of His goodness over such a variety of worlds, is that

He *cannot*, or will not, bestow so much goodness on one of those worlds, as a professed revelation from heaven has announced to us. While we enlarge the provinces of His empire, we tarnish all the glory of this enlargement, by saying, He has so much to care for, that the care of every one province must be less complete, and less vigilant, and less effectual, than it would otherwise have been. By the discoveries of modern science, we multiply the places of the creation; but along with this, we would impair the attribute of His eye being in every place to behold the evil and the good; and thus while we magnify one of His perfections, we do it at the expense of another; and, to bring Him within the grasp of our feeble capacity, we would deface one of the glories of that character, which it is our part to adore, as higher than all thought, and as greater than all comprehension.

The objection we are discussing, I shall state again in a single sentence. Since astronomy has unfolded to us such a number of worlds, it is not likely that God would pay so much attention to this one world, and set up such wonderful provisions for its benefit, as are announced to us in the Christian Revelation. This objection will have received its answer, if we can meet it by the following position:—that God, in addition to the bare faculty of dwelling on a multiplicity of objects at one and the same time, has this faculty in such wonderful perfection, that He can attend as fully, and provide as richly, and manifest all His attributes as illustriously, on every one of these objects, as if the rest had no existence, and no place whatever in His government or in His thoughts.

For the evidence of this position, we appeal, in the first place, to the personal history of each individual among you. Only grant us, that God never loses sight of any one thing He has created, and that no created thing can continue either to be, or to act independently of Him; and then, even upon the face of this world, humble as it is on the great scale of astronomy, how widely diversified, and how multiplied into many thousand distinct exercises, is the attention of God! His eye is upon every hour of my existence. His Spirit is intimately present with every thought of my heart. His inspiration gives birth to every purpose within me. His hand impresses a direction on every footstep of my goings. Every breath I inhale, is drawn by an energy which God deals out to me. This body, which, upon the slightest derangement, would become the prey of death, or of woful suffering, is now at ease, because He at this moment



is warding off from me a thousand dangers, and upholding the thousand movements of its complex and delicate machinery. His presiding influence keeps by me through the whole current of my restless and ever-changing history. When I walk by the wayside, He is along with me. When I enter into company, amid all my forgetfulness of Him, He never forgets me. In the silent watches of the night, when my eyelids have closed, and my spirit has sunk into unconsciousness, the observant eye of Him who never slumbers is upon me. I cannot fly from His presence. Go where I will, He tends me, and watches me, and cares for me; and the same Being who is now at work in the remotest domains of Nature and of Providence, is also at my right hand to eke out to me every moment of my being, and to uphold me in the exercise of all my feelings, and of all my faculties.

Now, what God is doing with me, He is doing with every distinct individual of this world's population. The intimacy of His presence, and attention, and care, reaches to one and to all of them. With a mind unburdened by the vastness of all its other concerns, He can prosecute, without distraction, the government and guardianship of every one son and daughter of the species. And is it for us, in the face of all this experience, ungratefully to draw a limit around the perfections of God—to aver, that the multitude of other worlds has withdrawn any portion of His benevolence from the one we occupy—or that He, whose eye is upon every separate family of the earth, would not lavish all the riches of His unsearchable attributes on some high plan of pardon and immortality in behalf of its countless generations?

But, secondly, were the mind of God so fatigued, and so occupied with the care of other worlds, as the objection presumes Him to be, should we not see some traces of neglect or of carelessness in His management of ours? Should we not behold, in many a field of observation, the evidence of its master being overcrowded with the variety of His other engagements? A man oppressed by a multitude of business, would simplify and reduce the work of any new concern that was devolved upon him. Now, point out a single mark of God being thus oppressed. Astronomy has laid open to us so many realms of creation, which were before unheard of, that the world we inhabit shrinks into one remote and solitary province of His wide monarchy. Tell us then, if, in any one field of this province which man has access to, you witness a single indication of God sparing Himself—of

God reduced to languor by the weight of His other employments—of God sinking under the burden of that vast superintendence which lies upon Him—of God being exhausted, as one of ourselves would be, by any number of concerns however great, by any variety of them however manifold; and do you not perceive, in that mighty profusion of wisdom and of goodness, which is scattered everywhere around us, that the thoughts of this unsearchable Being are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways?

My time does not suffer me to dwell on this topic, because, before I conclude, I must hasten to another illustration. But when I look abroad on the wondrous scene that is immediately before me—and see that in every direction it is a scene of the most various and unwearied activity—and expatiate on all the beauties of that garniture by which it is adorned, and on all the prints of design and of benevolence which abound in it—and think that the same God who holds the universe with its every system in the hollow of His hand, pencils every flower, and gives nourishment to every blade of grass, and actuates the movements of every living thing, and is not disabled, by the weight of His other cares, from enriching the humble department of nature I occupy with charms and accommodations of the most unbounded variety—then, surely if a message, bearing every mark of authenticity, should profess to come to me from God, and inform me of His mighty doings for the happiness of our species, it is not for me, in the face of all this evidence, to reject it as a tale of imposture, because astronomers hath told me that He has so many other worlds and other orders of beings to attend to,—and, when I think that it were a deposition of Him from His supremacy over the creatures He has formed, should a single sparrow fall to the ground without His appointment, then let science and sophistry try to cheat me of my comfort as they may—I will not let go the anchor of my confidence in God—I will not be afraid, for I am of more value than many sparrows.

But, thirdly, it was the telescope, that, by piercing the obscurity which lies between us and distant worlds, put Infidelity in possession of the argument against which we are now contending. But, about the time of its invention, another instrument was formed which laid open a scene no less wonderful, and rewarded the inquisitive spirit of man with a discovery which serves to neutralize the whole of this argument. This was the microscope. The one led me to see a system in every star. The

other leads me to see a world in every atom. The one taught me, that this mighty globe, with the whole burden of its people and of its countries, is but a grain of sand on the high field of immensity. The other teaches me, that every grain of sand may harbour within it the tribes and the families of a busy population. The one told me of the insignificance of the world I tread upon. The other redeems it from all its insignificance; for it tells me that in the leaves of every forest, and in the flowers of every garden, and in the waters of every rivulet, there are worlds teeming with life, and numberless as are the glories of the firmament. The one has suggested to me, that beyond and above all that is visible to man, there may lie fields of creation which sweep immeasurably along, and carry the impress of the Almighty's hand to the remotest scenes of the universe. The other suggests to me, that within and beneath all that minuteness which the aided eye of man has been able to explore, there may lie a region of invisibles; and that, could we draw aside the mysterious curtain which shrouds it from our senses, we might there see a theatre of as many wonders as astronomy has unfolded, a universe within the compass of a point so small, as to elude all the powers of the microscope, but where the wonder-working God finds room for the exercise of all His attributes, where He can raise another mechanism of worlds, and fill and animate them all with the evidences of His glory.

Now, mark how all this may be made to meet the argument of our infidel astronomers. By the telescope, they have discovered that no magnitude, however vast, is beyond the grasp of the Divinity. But by the microscope, we have also discovered that no minuteness, however shrunk from the notice of the human eye, is beneath the condescension of His regard. Every addition to the powers of the one instrument, extends the limit of His visible dominions. But by every addition to the powers of the other instrument, we see each part of them more crowded than before with the wonders of His unwearying hand. The one is constantly widening the circle of His territory. The other is as constantly filling up its separate portions with all that is rich and various and exquisite. In a word, by the one I am told that the Almighty is now at work in regions more distant than geometry has ever measured, and among worlds more manifold than numbers have ever reached. But, by the other, I am also told, that with a mind to comprehend the whole, in the vast compass of its generality, He has also a mind to concentrate a close

and a separate attention on each and on all of its particulars; and that the same God, who sends forth an upholding influence among the orbs and the movements of astronomy, can fill the recesses of every single atom with the intimacy of His presence, and travel, in all the greatness of His unimpaired attributes, upon every one spot and corner of the universe He has formed. They, therefore, who think that God will not put forth such a power, and such a goodness, and such a condescension in behalf of this world, as are ascribed to Him in the New Testament, because He has so many other worlds to attend to, think of Him as a man. They confine their view to the informations of the telescope, and forget altogether the informations of the other instrument. They only find room in their minds for His one attribute of a large and general superintendence; and keep out of their remembrance the equally impressive proofs we have for His other attribute, of a minute and multiplied attention to all that diversity of operations, where it is He that worketh all in all. And when I think that as one of the instruments of philosophy has heightened our every impression of the first of these attributes, so another instrument has no less heightened our impression of the second of them—then I can no longer resist the conclusion, that it would be a transgression of sound argument, as well as a daring of impiety, to draw a limit around the doings of this unsearchable God—and should a professed revelation from heaven tell me of an act of condescension in behalf of some separate world, so wonderful that angels desired to look into it, and the Eternal Son had to move from His seat of glory to carry it into accomplishment, all I ask is the evidence of such a revelation; for, let it tell me as much as it may of God letting Himself down for the benefit of one single province of His dominions, this is no more than what I see lying scattered, in numberless examples before me—and running through the whole line of my recollections—and meeting me in every walk of observation to which I can betake myself; and, now that the microscope has unveiled the wonders of another region, I see strewn around me, with a profusion which baffles my every attempt to comprehend it, the evidence that there is no one portion of the universe of God too minute for His notice, nor too humble for the visitations of His care.

As the end of all these illustrations, let me bestow a single paragraph on what I conceive to be the precise state of this argument.

It is a wonderful thing that God should be so unencumbered by the concerns of a whole universe, that He can give a constant attention to every moment of every individual in this world's population. But, wonderful as it is, you do not hesitate to admit it as true, on the evidence of your own recollections. It is a wonderful thing that He, whose eye is at every instant on so many worlds, should have peopled the world we inhabit with all the traces of the varied design and benevolence which abound in it. But great as the wonder is, you do not allow so much as the shadow of improbability to darken it, for its reality is what you actually witness, and you never think of questioning the evidence of observation. It is wonderful, it is passing wonderful, that the same God, whose presence is diffused through immensity, and who spreads the ample canopy of His administration over all its dwelling-places, should, with an energy as fresh and as unexpended as if He had only begun the work of creation, turn Him to the neighbourhood around us, and lavish on its every handbreadth all the exuberance of His goodness, and crowd it with the many thousand varieties of conscious existence. But, be the wonder incomprehensible as it may, you do not suffer in your mind the burden of a single doubt to lie upon it, because you do not question the report of the microscope. You do not refuse its information, nor turn away from it as an incompetent channel of evidence. But to bring it still nearer to the point at issue, there are many who never looked through a microscope, but who rest an implicit faith in all its revelations; and upon what evidence, I would ask? Upon the evidence of testimony—upon the credit they give to the authors of the books they have read, and the belief they put in the record of their observations. Now, at this point I make my stand. It is wonderful that God should be so interested in the redemption of a single world, as to send forth His well-beloved Son upon the errand; and He to accomplish it, should, mighty to save, put forth all His strength, and travail in the greatness of it. But such wonders as these have already multiplied upon you; and when evidence is given of their truth, you have resigned your every judgment of the unsearchable God, and rested in the faith of them. I demand, in the name of sound and consistent philosophy, that you do the same in the matter before us—and take it up as a question of evidence—and examine that medium of testimony through which the miracles and informations of the Gospel have come to your door

—and go not to admit as argument here, what would not be admitted as argument in any of the analogies of nature and observation—and take along with you in this field of inquiry, a lesson which you should have learned upon other fields—even the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, that His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways are past finding out.

I do not enter at all into the positive evidence for the truth of the Christian Revelation, my single aim at present being to dispose of one of the objections which is conceived to stand in the way of it. Let me suppose, then, that this is done to the satisfaction of a philosophical inquirer; and that the evidence is sustained; and that the same mind that is familiarized to all the sublimities of natural science, and has been in the habit of contemplating God in association with all the magnificence which is around him, shall be brought to submit its thoughts to the captivity of the doctrine of Christ. Oh! with what veneration, and gratitude, and wonder, should he look on the descent of Him into this lower world, who made all these things, and without whom was not anything made that was made. What a grandeur does it throw over every step in the redemption of a fallen world, to think of its being done by Him who unrobed Him of the glories of so wide a monarchy, and came to this humblest of its provinces, in the disguise of a servant, and took upon Him the form of our degraded species, and let Himself down to sorrows and to sufferings and to death for us! In this love of an expiring Saviour to those for whom in agony He poured out His soul, there is a height, and a depth, and a length, and a breadth, more than I can comprehend; and let me never from this moment neglect so great a salvation, or lose my hold of an atonement, made sure by Him who cried that it was finished, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. It was not the visit of an empty parade that He made to us. It was for the accomplishment of some substantial purpose; and if that purpose is announced, and stated to consist in His dying the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God, let us never doubt of our acceptance in that way of communication with our Father in heaven, which He hath opened and made known to us. In taking to that way, let us follow His every direction, with that humility which a sense of all this wonderful condescension is fitted to inspire. Let us forsake all that He bids us forsake. Let us do all that He bids us do.

Let us give ourselves up to His guidance with the docility of children overpowered by a kindness that we never merited, and a love that is unquelled by all the perverseness and all the ingratitude of our stubborn nature—for what shall we render unto Him for such mysterious benefits—to Him who has thus been mindful of us—to Him who thus has deigned to visit us?

But the whole of this argument is not yet exhausted. We have scarcely entered on the defence that is commonly made against the plea which Infidelity rests on the wonderful extent of the universe of God, and the insignificance of our assigned portion of it. The way in which we have attempted to dispose of this plea, is by insisting on the evidence that is everywhere around us, of God combining, with the largeness of a vast and mighty superintendence, which reaches the outskirts of creation, and spreads over all its amplitudes—the faculty of bestowing as much attention, and exercising as complete and manifold a wisdom, and lavishing as profuse and inexhaustible a goodness, on each of its humblest departments, as if it formed the whole extent of His territory.

In the whole of this argument we have looked upon the earth as isolated from the rest of the universe altogether. But, according to the way in which the astronomical objection is commonly met, the earth is not viewed as in a state of detachment from the other worlds, and the other orders of being which God has called into existence. It is looked upon as the member of a more extended system. It is associated with the magnificence of a moral empire, as wide as the kingdom of nature. It is not merely asserted, what in our last Discourse has been already done, that for anything we can know by reason, the plan of redemption may have its influences and its bearings on those creatures of God who people other regions, and occupy other fields in the immensity of His dominions; that to argue, therefore, on this plan being instituted for the single benefit of the world we live in, and of the species to which we belong, is a mere presumption of the Infidel himself; and that the objection he rears on it must fall to the ground, when the vanity of the presumption is exposed. The Christian apologist thinks he can go farther than this—that he can not merely expose the utter baselessness of the Infidel assertion, but that he has positive ground for erecting an opposite and a confronting assertion in its place—and that, after having neutralized their position, by showing the entire absence of all observation in its behalf, he

can pass on to the distinct and affirmative testimony of the Bible.

We do think that this lays open a very interesting tract, not of wild and fanciful, but of most legitimate and sober-minded speculation. And anxious as we are to put everything that bears upon the Christian argument into all its lights; and fearless as we feel for the result of a most thorough sifting of it; and thinking as we do think it, the foulest scorn that any pigmy philosopher of the day should mince his ambiguous scepticism to a set of giddy and ignorant admirers, or that a half-learned and superficial public should associate with the Christian priesthood, the blindness and the bigotry of a sinking cause—with these feelings we are not disposed to shun a single question that may be started on the subject of the Christian Evidences. There is not one of its parts or bearings which needs the shelter of a disguise thrown over it. Let the priests of another faith ply their prudential expedients, and look so wise and so wary in the execution of them. But Christianity stands in a higher and a firmer attitude. The defensive armour of a shrinking or timid policy does not suit her. Hers is the naked majesty of truth; and with all the grandeur of age, but with none of its infirmities, has she come down to us, and gathered new strength from the battles she has won in the many controversies of many generations. With such a religion as this there is nothing to hide. All should be above boards. And the broadest light of day should be made fully and freely to circulate throughout all her secrecies. But secrets she has none. To her belong the frankness and the simplicity of conscious greatness; and whether she has to contend with the pride of philosophy; or stand in fronted opposition to the prejudices of the multitude, she does it upon her own strength, and spurns all the props and all the auxiliaries of superstition away from her.

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#### SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITIES.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded! Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day: that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there; that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.—1 Kings viii. 27-29.



For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven.—Job xxviii. 24.

For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.—Job xxxiv. 21.

Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly.—Psalm cxxxviii. 6.

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?—Psalm cxxxix. 1-7.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.—Psalm cxxxix. 17, 18.

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.—Prov. xv. 3.

Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord: do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.—Jer. xxiii. 24.

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?—Matt. vi. 26, 28-30.

But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.—Matt. x. 30.

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.—Heb. iv. 13.

## DISCOURSE IV.

ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF MAN'S MORAL HISTORY IN THE DISTANT PLACES  
OF CREATION.

"Which things the angels desire to look into."—1 PETER i. 12.

THERE is a limit, across which man cannot carry any one of his perceptions, and from the ulterior of which he cannot gather a single observation to guide or to inform him. While he keeps by the objects which are near, he can get the knowledge of them conveyed to his mind through the ministry of several of the senses. He can feel a substance that is within reach of his hand. He can smell a flower that is presented to him. He can taste the food that is before him. He can hear a sound of certain pitch and intensity; and, so much does this sense of hearing widen his intercourse with external nature, that, from the distance of miles, it can bring him in an occasional intimation.

But of all the tracts of conveyance which God has been pleased to open up between the mind of man, and the theatre by which he is surrounded, there is none by which he so multiplies his acquaintance with the rich and the varied creation on every side of him, as by the organ of the eye. It is this which gives to man his loftiest command over the scenery of nature. It is this by which so broad a range of observation is submitted to him. It is this which enables him, by the act of a single moment, to send an exploring look over the surface of an ample territory, to crowd his mind with the whole assembly of its objects, and to fill his vision with those countless hues which diversify and adorn it. It is this which carries him abroad over all that is sublime in the immensity of distance; which sets him as it were on an elevated platform, from whence he may cast a surveying glance over the arena of innumerable worlds; which spreads before him so mighty a province of contemplation, that the earth he inhabits only appears to furnish him with the pedestal on which he may stand, and from which

he may descry the wonders of all that magnificence which the Divinity has poured so abundantly around him. It is by the narrow outlet of the eye that the mind of man takes its excursive flight over those golden tracks, where, in all the exhaustlessness of creative wealth, lie scattered the suns and the systems of astronomy. But how good a thing it is, and how becoming well, for the philosopher to be humble even amid the proudest march of human discovery, and the sublimest triumphs of the human understanding, when he thinks of that unscaled barrier, beyond which no power, either of eye or of telescope, shall ever carry him; when he thinks that, on the other side of it, there is a height, and a depth, and a length, and a breadth, to which the whole of this concave and visible firmament dwindles into the insignificancy of an atom—and, above all, how ready should he be to cast every lofty imagination away from him, when he thinks of the God who, on the simple foundation of His word, has reared the whole of this stately architecture, and, by the force of His preserving hand, continues to uphold it; and should the word again come out from Him, that this earth shall pass away, and a portion of the heavens which are around it, shall fall back into the annihilation from which He at first summoned them—what an impressive rebuke does it bring on the swelling vanity of science, to think that the whole field of its most ambitious enterprises may be swept away altogether, and still there remain before the eye of Him who sitteth on the throne, an untravelled immensity, which He hath filled with innumerable splendours, and over the whole face of which He hath inscribed the evidence of His high attributes, in all their might, and in all their manifestation.

But man has a great deal more to keep him humble of his understanding, than a mere sense of that boundary which skirts and which terminates the material field of his contemplations. He ought also to feel, how, within that boundary, the vast majority of things is mysterious and unknown to him—that even in the inner chamber of his own consciousness, where so much lies hidden from the observation of others, there is also to himself a little world of incomprehensibles; that if stepping beyond the limits of this familiar home, he look no farther than to the members of his family, there is much in the cast and the colour of every mind that is above his powers of divination; that in proportion as he recedes from the centre of his own personal experience, there is a cloud of ignorance and secrecy which

spreads, and thickens, and throws a deep and impenetrable veil over the intricacies of every one department of human contemplation; that of all around him, his knowledge is naked and superficial, and confined to a few of those more conspicuous lineaments which strike upon his senses; that the whole face, both of nature and of society, presents him with questions which he cannot unriddle, and tells him that beneath the surface of all that the eye can rest upon, there lies the profoundness of a most unsearchable latency; and should he in some lofty enterprise of thought, leave this world, and shoot afar into those tracks of speculation which astronomy has opened—should he, baffled by the mysteries which beset his footsteps upon earth, attempt an ambitious flight towards the mysteries of heaven,—let him go, but let the justness of a pious and philosophical modesty go along with him—let him forget not, that from the moment his mind has taken its ascending way for a few little miles above the world he treads upon, his every sense abandons him but one—that number, and motion, and magnitude, and figure, make up all the bareness of its elementary informations—that these orbs have sent him scarce another message than told by their feeble glimmering upon his eye, the simple fact of their existence—that he sees not the landscape of other worlds—that he knows not the moral system of any one of them—nor athwart the long and trackless vacancy which lies between, does there fall upon his listening ear the hum of their mighty populations.

But the knowledge which he cannot fetch up himself from the obscurity of this wondrous but untravelled scene, by the exercise of any one of his own senses, might be fetched to him by the testimony of a competent messenger. Conceive a native of one of these planetary mansions to light upon our world, and all we should require would be, to be satisfied of his credentials, that we may give our faith to every point of information he had to offer us. With the solitary exception of what we have been enabled to gather by the instruments of astronomy, there is not one of his communications about the place he came from, on which we possess any means at all of confronting him; and therefore, could he only appear before us invested with the characters of truth, we should never think of anything else than taking up the whole matter of his testimony just as he brought it to us.

It were well\* had a sound philosophy schooled its professing

disciples to the same kind of acquiescence in another message, which has actually come to the world ; and has told us of matters still more remote from every power of unaided observation ; and has been sent from a more sublime and mysterious distance, even from that God of whom it is said that " clouds and darkness are the habitation of his throne ;" and treating of a theme so lofty and so inaccessible, as the counsels of that Eternal Spirit, " whose goings forth are of old, even from everlasting," challenges of man that he should submit his every thought to the authority of this high communication. Oh ! had the philosophers of the day known as well as their great master, how to draw the vigorous landmark which verges the field of legitimate discovery, they should have seen when it is that philosophy becomes vain, and science is falsely so called ; and how it is, that when philosophy is true to her principles, she shuts up her faithful votary to the Bible, and makes him willing to count all but loss, for the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and of Him crucified.

But let it be well observed, that the object of this message is not to convey information to us about the state of these planetary regions. This is not the matter with which it is fraught. It is a message from the throne of God to this rebellious province of His dominions ; and the purpose of it is, to reveal the fearful extent of our guilt and of our danger, and to lay before us the overtures of reconciliation. Were a similar message sent from the metropolis of a mighty empire to one of its remote and revolutionary districts, we should not look to it for much information about the state or economy of the intermediate provinces. This were a departure from the topic on hand—though still there may chance to be some incidental allusions to the extent and resources of the whole monarchy, to the existence of a similar spirit of rebellion in other quarters of the land, or to the general principle of loyalty by which it was pervaded. Some casual references of this kind may be inserted in such a proclamation, or they may not—and it is with this precise feeling of ambiguity that we open the record of that embassy which has been sent us from heaven, to see if we can gather anything there, about other places of the creation, to meet the objections of the infidel astronomer. But, while we pursue this object, let us be careful not to push the speculation beyond the limits of the written testimony ; let us keep a just and a steady eye on the actual boundary of our knowledge, that, throughout every distinct step of our argument, we might preserve that chaste and unambitious

spirit, which characterizes the philosophy of him who explored these distant heavens, and, by the force of his genius, unravelled the secret of that wondrous mechanism which upholds them.

The informations of the Bible upon this subject are of two sorts—that from which we confidently gather the fact, that the history of the redemption of our species is known in other and distant places of the creation—and that from which we indistinctly guess at the fact, that the redemption itself may stretch beyond the limits of the world we occupy.

And here it may shortly be adverted to, that, though we know little or nothing of the moral and theological economy of the other planets, we are not to infer, that the beings who occupy these widely-extended regions, even though not higher than we in the scale of understanding, know little of ours. Our first parents, ere they committed that act by which they brought themselves and their posterity into the need of redemption, had frequent and familiar intercourse with God. He walked with them in the garden of paradise, and there did angels hold their habitual converse; and, should the same unblotted innocence which charmed and attracted these superior beings to the haunts of Eden, be perpetuated in every planet but our own, then might each of them be the scene of high and heavenly communications, and an open way for the messengers of God be kept up with them all, and their inhabitants be admitted to a share in the themes and contemplations of angels, and have their spirits exercised on those things, of which we are told that the angels desire to look into them; and thus, as we talk of the public mind of a city, or the public mind of an empire—by the well-frequented avenues of a free and ready circulation, a public mind might be formed throughout the whole extent of God's sinless and intelligent creation—and just as we often read of the eyes of all Europe being turned to the one spot where some affair of eventful importance is going on, there might be the eyes of a whole universe turned to the one world, where rebellion against the Majesty of heaven had planted its standard; and for the readmission of which within the circle of His fellowship, God, whose justice was inflexible, but whose mercy He had, by some plan of mysterious wisdom, made to rejoice over it, was putting forth all the might, and travailing in all the greatness of the attributes which belonged to Him.

But, for the full understanding of this argument, it must be remarked, that while in our exiled habitation, where all is dark-

ness and rebellion and enmity, the creature engrosses every heart, and our affections, when they shift at all, only wander from one fleeting vanity to another, it is not so in the habitations of the unfallen. There, every desire and every movement is subordinated to God. He is seen in all that is formed, and in all that is spread around them—and, amid the fulness of that delight with which they expatiate over the good and the fair of this wondrous universe, the animating charm which pervades their every contemplation, is, that they behold on each visible thing, the impress of the mind that conceived, and of the hand that made and that upholds it. Here, God is banished from the thoughts of every natural man, and, by a firm and constantly maintained act of usurpation, do the things of sense and of time wield an entire ascendancy. There, God is all in all. They walk in His light. They rejoice in the beatitudes of His presence. The veil is from off their eyes; and they see the character of a presiding Divinity in every scene, and in every event to which the Divinity has given birth. It is this which stamps a glory and an importance on the whole field of their contemplations; and when they see a new evolution in the history of created things, the reason they bend towards it so attentive an eye, is, that it speaks to their understanding some new evolution in the purposes of God—some new manifestation of His high attributes—some new and interesting step in the history of His sublime administration.

Now, we ought to be aware how it takes off, not from the intrinsic weight, but from the actual impression of our argument, that this devotedness to God which reigns in other places of the creation; this interest in Him as the constant and essential principle of all enjoyment; this concern in the untaintedness of His glory; this delight in the survey of His perfections and His doings, are what the men of our corrupt and darkened world cannot sympathize with.

But however little we may enter into it, the Bible tells us, by many intimations, that amongst those creatures who have not fallen from their allegiance, nor departed from the living God, God is their all—that love to Him sits enthroned in their hearts, and fills them with all the ecstasy of an overwhelming affection—that a sense of grandeur never so elevates their souls, as when they look at the might and majesty of the Eternal—that no field of cloudless transparency so enchants them by the blissfulness of its visions, as when, at the shrine of infinite and unspotted

holiness, they bend themselves in raptured adoration — that no beauty so fascinates and attracts them, as does that moral beauty which throws a softening lustre over the awfulness of the Godhead—in a word, that the image of His character is ever present to their contemplations, and the unceasing joy of their sinless existence lies in the knowledge and the admiration of Deity.

Let us put forth an effort, and keep a steady hold of this consideration, for the deadness of our earthly imaginations makes an effort necessary; and we shall perceive, that though the world we live in were the alone theatre of redemption, there is a something in the redemption itself that is fitted to draw the eye of an arrested universe towards it. Surely, where delight in God is the constant enjoyment, and the earnest intelligent contemplation of God is the constant exercise, there is nothing in the whole compass of nature or of history, that can so set His adoring myriads upon the gaze, as some new and wondrous evolution of the character of God. Now this is found in the plan of our redemption; nor do we see how, in any transaction between the great Father of existence, and the children who have sprung from Him, the moral attributes of the Deity could, if we may so express ourselves, be put to so severe and so delicate a test. It is true, that the great matters of sin and of salvation fall without impression on the heavy ears of a listless and alienated world. But they who, to use the language of the Bible, are light in the Lord, look otherwise at these things. They see sin in all its malignity, and salvation in all its mysterious greatness. And it would put them on the stretch of all their faculties, when they saw rebellion lifting up its standard against the Majesty of heaven, and the truth and the justice of God embarked on the threatenings He had uttered against all the doers of iniquity, and the honours of that august throne, which has the firm pillars of immutability to rest upon, linked with the fulfilment of the law that had come out from it; and when nothing else was looked for, but that God, by putting forth the power of His wrath, should accomplish His every denunciation, and vindicate the inflexibility of His government, and, by one sweeping deed of vengeance assert, in the sight of all His creatures, the sovereignty which belonged to Him—with what desire must they have pondered on His ways, when, amid the urgency of all those demands which looked so high and so indispensable, they saw the unfoldings of the attribute of mercy—and that the



supreme Lawgiver was bending upon His guilty creatures an eye of tenderness—and that, in His profound and unsearchable wisdom, He was devising for them some plan of restoration—and that the eternal Son had to move from His dwelling-place in heaven, to carry it forward through all the difficulties by which it was encompassed—and that, after by the virtue of His mysterious sacrifice He had magnified the glory of every other perfection, He made mercy rejoice over them all, and threw open a way by which we sinful and polluted wanderers might, with the whole lustre of the Divine character untarnished, be re-admitted into fellowship with God, and be again brought back within the circle of His loyal and affectionate family.

Now, the essential character of such a transaction, viewed as a manifestation of God, does not hang upon the number of worlds over which this sin and this salvation may have extended. We know that over this one world such an economy of wisdom and of mercy is instituted—and, even should this be the only world that is embraced by it, the moral display of the Godhead is mainly and substantially the same, as if it reached throughout the whole of that habitable extent which the science of astronomy has made known to us. By the disobedience of this one world, the law was trampled on—and, in the business of making truth and mercy to meet, and have a harmonious accomplishment on the men of this world, the dignity of God was put to the same trial; the justice of God appeared to lay the same immovable barrier; the wisdom of God had to clear a way through the same difficulties; the forgiveness of God had to find the same mysterious conveyance to the sinners of a solitary world, as to the sinners of half a universe. The extent of the field upon which this question was decided, has no more influence on the question itself, than the figure or the dimensions of that field of combat on which some great political question was fought, has on the importance or on the moral principles of the controversy that gave rise to it. This objection about the narrowness of the theatre, carries along with it all the grossness of materialism. To the eye of spiritual and intelligent beings, it is nothing. In their view, the redemption of a sinful world derives its chief interest from the display it gives of the mind and purposes of the Deity—and, should that world be but a single speck in the immensity of the works of God, the only way in which this affects their estimate of Him is to magnify His loving-kindness—who, rather than lose one solitary world of the myriads He has formed,

would lavish all the riches of His beneficence and of His wisdom on the recovery of its guilty population.

Now, though it must be admitted that the Bible does not speak clearly or decisively as to the proper effect of redemption being extended to other worlds, it speaks most clearly and most decisively about the knowledge of it being disseminated amongst other orders of created intelligence than our own. But if the contemplation of God be their supreme enjoyment, then the very circumstance of our redemption being known to them, may invest it, even though it be but the redemption of one solitary world, with an importance as wide as the universe itself. It may spread amongst the hosts of immensity a new illustration of the character of Him who is all their praise; and in looking towards whom every energy within them is moved to the exercise of a deep and delighted admiration. The scene of the transaction may be narrow in point of material extent; while in the transaction itself there may be such a moral dignity, as to blazon the perfections of the Godhead over the face of creation; and, from the manifested glory of the Eternal, to send forth a tide of ecstasy, and of high gratulation, throughout the whole extent of His dependent provinces.

We shall not, in proof of the position, that the history of our redemption is known in other and distant places of creation, and is matter of deep interest and feeling amongst other orders of created intelligence—we shall not put down all the quotations which might be assembled together upon this argument. It is an impressive circumstance, that when Moses and Elias made a visit to our Saviour on the mount of transfiguration, and appeared in glory from heaven, the topic they brought along with them, and with which they were fraught, was the decease He was going to accomplish at Jerusalem. And however insipid the things of our salvation may be to an earthly understanding, we are made to know, that in the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow, there is matter to attract the notice of celestial spirits, for these are the very things, says the Bible, which angels desire to look into. And however listlessly we, the dull and grovelling children of an exiled family, may feel about the perfections of the Godhead, and the display of these perfections in the economy of the Gospel, it is intimated to us in the book of God's message, that the creation has its districts and its provinces; and we accordingly read of thrones and dominions and principalities and powers—and whether these terms

denote the separate regions of government, or the beings who, by a commission granted from the sanctuary of heaven, sit in delegated authority over them—even in their eyes the mystery of Christ stands arrayed in all the splendour of unsearchable riches; for we are told that this mystery was revealed for the very intent, that unto the principalities and powers, in heavenly places, might be made known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God. And while we, whose prospect reaches not beyond the narrow limits of the corner we occupy, look on the dealings of God in the world, as carrying in them all the insignificancy of a provincial transaction; God Himself, whose eye reaches to places which our eye hath not seen, nor our ear heard of, neither hath it entered into the imagination of our heart to conceive, stamps a universality on the whole matter of the Christian salvation, by such revelations as the following:—That he is to gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in him—and that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth—and that by him God reconciled all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

We will not say in how far some of these passages extend the proper effect of that redemption which is by Christ Jesus, to other quarters of the universe of God; but they at least go to establish a widely disseminated knowledge of this transaction amongst the other orders of created intelligence. And they give us a distant glimpse of something more extended. They present a faint opening, through which may be seen some few traces of a wider and a nobler dispensation. They bring before us a dim transparency, on the other side of which the images of an obscure magnificence dazzle indistinctly upon the eye; and tell us, that in the economy of redemption, there is a grandeur commensurate to all that is known of the other works and purposes of the Eternal. They offer us no details; and man, who ought not to attempt a wisdom above that which is written, should never put forth his hand to the drapery of that impenetrable curtain which God, in His mysterious wisdom, has spread over those ways, or which it is but a very small portion that we in reality know. But certain it is, that we know so much of them from the Bible; and the Infidel, with all the pride of his boasted astronomy, knows so little of them, from any power of observation—that the baseless argument of his, on which we have dwelt so long,

is overborne in the light of all that positive evidence which God has poured around the record of His own testimony, and even in the light of its more obscure and casual intimations.

The minute and variegated details of the way in which this wondrous economy is extended, God has chosen to withhold from us; but He has oftener than once made to us a broad and a general announcement of its dignity. He does not tell us, whether the fountain opened in the house of Judah, for sin and for uncleanness, sends forth its healing streams to other worlds than our own. He does not tell us the extent of the atonement. But He tells that the atonement itself, known, as it is, among the myriads of the celestial, forms the high song of eternity; that the Lamb who was slain, is surrounded by the acclamations of one wide and universal empire; that the might of His wondrous achievements spreads a tide of gratulation over the multitudes who are about His throne; and that there never ceases to ascend from the worshippers of Him, who washed us from our sins in His blood, a voice loud as from numbers without number, sweet as from blessed voices uttering joy, when heaven rings jubilee, and loud hosannas fill the eternal regions.

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.”

A king might have the whole of his reign crowded with the enterprises of glory; and by the might of his arms, and the wisdom of his counsels, might win the first reputation among the potentates of the world; and be idolized throughout all his provinces, for the wealth and the security that he had spread around them—and still it is conceivable, that by the act of a single day in behalf of a single family; by some soothing visitation of tenderness to a poor and solitary cottage; by some deed of compassion, which conferred enlargement and relief on one despairing sufferer; by some graceful movement of sensibility at a tale of wretchedness; by some noble effort of self-denial, in virtue of which he subdued his every purpose of revenge, and

spread the mantle of a generous oblivion over the fault of the man who had insulted and aggrieved him; above all, by an exercise of pardon so skilfully administered, as that, instead of bringing him down to a state of defencelessness against the provocation of future injuries, it threw a deeper sacredness over him, and stamped a more inviolable dignity than ever on his person and character:—why, on the strength of one such performance, done in a single hour, and reaching no further in its immediate effects than to one house or to one individual, it is a most possible thing, that the highest monarch upon earth might draw such a lustre around him, as would eclipse the renown of all his public achievements—and that such a display of magnanimity, or of worth, beaming from the secrecy of his familiar moments, might waken a more cordial veneration in every bosom, than all the splendour of his conspicuous history—ay, and that it might pass down to posterity as a more enduring monument of greatness, and raise him farther, by its moral elevation, above the level of ordinary praise; and when he passes in review before the men of distant ages, may this deed of modest, gentle, unobtrusive virtue, be at all times appealed to as the most sublime and touching memorial of his name.

In like manner did the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, surrounded as He is with the splendours of a wide and everlasting monarchy, turn Him to our humble habitation; and the footsteps of God manifest in the flesh, have been on the narrow spot of ground we occupy; and small though our mansion be amid the orbs and the systems of immensity, hither hath the King of glory bent His mysterious way, and entered the tabernacle of men, and in the disguise of a servant did He sojourn for years under the roof which canopies our obscure and solitary world. Yes, it is but a twinkling atom in the peopled infinity of worlds that are around it—but look to the moral grandeur of the transaction, and not to the material extent of the field upon which it was executed—and from the retirement of our dwelling-place, there may issue forth such a display of the Godhead, as will circulate the glories of His name amongst all His worshippers. Here sin entered. Here was the kind and universal beneficence of a Father repaid by the ingratitude of a whole family. Here the law of God was dishonoured, and that too in the face of its proclaimed and unalterable sanctions. Here the mighty contest of the attributes was ended—and when justice put forth its demands, and truth called for the fulfilment

of its warnings, and the immutability of God would not recede by a single iota from any one of its positions, and all the severities He had ever uttered against the children of iniquity, seemed to gather into one cloud of threatening vengeance on the tenement that held us—did the visit of the only-begotten Son chase away all these obstacles to the triumph of mercy—and humble as the tenement may be, deeply shaded in the obscurity of insignificance as it is, among the statelier mansions which are on every side of it—yet will the recall of its exiled family never be forgotten, and the illustration that has been given here of the mingled grace and majesty of God will never lose its place among the themes and the acclamations of eternity.

And here it may be remarked, that as the earthly king who throws a moral aggrandizement around him by the act of a single day, finds, that after its performance he may have the space of many years for gathering to himself the triumphs of an extended reign—so the King who sits on high, and with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, will find, that after the period of that special administration is ended, by which this strayed world is again brought back within the limits of His favoured creation, there is room enough along the mighty track of eternity, for accumulating upon Himself a glory as wide and as universal as is the extent of His dominions. You will allow the most illustrious of this world's potentates, to give some hour of his private history to a deed of cottage or of domestic tenderness; and every time you think of the interesting story, you will feel how sweetly and how gracefully the remembrance of it blends itself with the fame of his public achievements. But still you think that there would not have been room enough for these achievements of his, had much of his time been spent, either amongst the habitations of the poor, or in the retirement of his own family; and you conceive, that it is because a single day bears so small a proportion to the time of his whole history, that he has been able to combine an interesting display of private worth, with all that brilliancy of exhibition, which has brought him down to posterity in the character of an august and a mighty sovereign.

Now apply this to the matter before us. Had the history of our redemption been confined within the limits of a single day, the argument that Infidelity has drawn from the multitude of other worlds would never have been offered. It is true, that

ours is but an insignificant portion of the territory of God—but if the attentions by which He has signalized it had only taken up a single day, this would never have occurred to us as forming any sensible withdrawal of the mind of the Deity from the concerns of His vast and universal government. It is the time which the plan of our salvation requires, that startles all those on whom this argument has any impression. It is the time taken up about this paltry world, which they feel to be out of proportion to the number of other worlds, and to the immensity of the surrounding creation. Now, to meet this impression, we do not insist at present on what we have already brought forward, that God, whose ways are not as our ways, can have His eye at the same instant on every place, and can divide and diversify His attention into any number of distinct exercises. What we have now to remark is, that the Infidel who urges the astronomical objection to the truth of Christianity, is only looking with half an eye to the principle on which it rests. Carry out the principle, and the objection vanishes. He looks abroad on the immensity of space, and tells us how impossible it is, that this narrow corner of it can be so distinguished by the attentions of the Deity. Why does he not also look abroad on the magnificence of eternity; and perceive how the whole period of these peculiar attentions, how the whole time which elapses between the fall of man and the consummation of the scheme of his recovery, is but the twinkling of a moment to the mighty roll of innumerable ages! The whole interval between the time of Jesus Christ's leaving His Father's abode to sojourn amongst us, to that time when He shall have put all His enemies under His feet, and delivered up the kingdom to God even His Father, that God may be all in all; the whole of this interval bears as small a proportion to the whole of the Almighty's reign, as this solitary world does to the universe around it; and an infinitely smaller proportion than any time, however short, which an earthly monarch spends on some enterprise of private benevolence, does to the whole walk of his public and recorded history.

Why then does not the man, who can shoot his conceptions so sublimely abroad over the field of an immensity that knows no limits—why does he not also shoot them forward through the vista of a succession that ever flows without stop and without termination? He has burst across the confines of this world's habitation in space, and out of the field which lies on

the other side of it has he gathered an argument against the truth of revelation. We feel that we have nothing to do but to burst across the confines of this world's history in time, and out of the futurity which lies beyond it can we gather that which will blow the argument to pieces, or stamp upon it all the narrowness of a partial and mistaken calculation. The day is coming when the whole of this wondrous history shall be looked back upon by the eye of remembrance, and be regarded as one incident in the extended annals of creation; and, with all the illustration and all the glory it has thrown on the character of the Deity, will it be seen as a single step in the evolution of His designs; and long as the time may appear, from the first act of our redemption to its final accomplishment, and close and exclusive as we may think the attentions of God upon it, it will be found that it has left Him room enough for all His concerns; and that, on the high scale of eternity, it is but one of those passing and ephemeral transactions which crowd the history of a never-ending administration.

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#### SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITIES.

And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.—Gen. xxviii. 12.

For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.—Psalm xc. 4.

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.—Isa. li. 6.

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.—Matt. xvi. 27.

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.—Matt. xxv. 31.

Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.—Luke xii. 8, 9.

And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.—John i. 51.

We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.—1 Cor. iv. 9.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Phil. ii. 9-11.

When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.—2 Thess. i. 7.

And, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,



justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.—1 Tim. iii. 16.

I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things.—1 Tim. v. 21.

And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.—Heb. i. 6.

But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.—Heb. xii. 22-24.

But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up.—2 Pet. iii. 8-10.

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.—Rev. x. 5, 6.

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.—Rev. xiv. 9, 10.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.—Rev. xx. 11.

## DISCOURSE V.

ON THE SYMPATHY THAT IS FELT FOR MAN IN THE DISTANT PLACES OF  
CREATION.

“ I say unto you, That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”—LUKE xv. 7.

WE have already attempted at full length to establish the position, that the infidel argument of astronomers goes to expunge a natural perfection from the character of God, even that wondrous property of His, by which He, at the same instant of time, can bend a close and a careful attention on a countless diversity of objects, and diffuse the intimacy of His power and of His presence, from the greatest to the minutest and most insignificant of them all. We also adverted shortly to this other circumstance, that it went to impair a moral attribute of the Deity. It goes to impair the benevolence of His nature. It is saying much for the benevolence of God, to say, that a single world or a single system is not enough for it—that it must have the spread of a mightier region, on which it may pour forth a tide of exuberancy throughout all its provinces—that as far as our vision can carry us, it has strewed immensity with the floating receptacles of life, and has stretched over each of them the garniture of such a sky as mantles our own habitation—and that even from distances which are far beyond the reach of human eye, the songs of gratitude and praise may now be arising to the one God, who sits surrounded by the regards of His one great and universal family.

Now it is saying much for the benevolence of God, to say, that it sends forth these wide and distant emanations over the surface of a territory so ample, that the world we inhabit, lying imbedded, as it does, amidst so much surrounding greatness, shrinks into a point that to the universal eye might appear to be almost imperceptible. But does it not add to the power and to the perfection of this universal eye, that at the very moment

it is taking a comprehensive survey of the vast, it can fasten a steady and undistracted attention on each minute and separate portion of it; that at the very moment it is looking at all worlds, it can look most pointedly and most intelligently to each of them; that at the very moment it sweeps the field of immensity, it can settle all the earnestness of its regards upon every distinct handbreadth of that field; that at the very moment at which it embraces the totality of existence, it can send a most thorough and penetrating inspection into each of its details, and into every one of its endless diversities? We cannot fail to perceive how much this adds to the power of the all-seeing eye. Tell us then, if it do not add as much perfection to the benevolence of God, that while it is expatiating over the vast field of created things, there is not one portion of the field overlooked by it; that while it scatters blessings over the whole of an infinite range, it causes them to descend in a shower of plenty on every separate habitation; that while His arm is underneath and round about all worlds, He enters within the precincts of every one of them, and gives a care and a tenderness to each individual of their teeming population. Oh! does not the God, who is said to be love, shed over this attribute of His its finest illustration—when, while He sits in the highest heaven, and pours out His fulness on the whole subordinate domain of nature and of providence, He bows a pitying regard on the very humblest of His children, and sends His reviving Spirit into every heart, and cheers by His presence every home, and provides for the wants of every family, and watches every sick-bed, and listens to the complaints of every sufferer; and while by His wondrous mind the weight of universal government is borne, oh, is it not more wondrous and more excellent still, that He feels for every sorrow, and has an ear open to every prayer?

“It doth not yet appear what we shall be,” says the apostle John, “but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” It is the present lot of the angels, that they behold the face of our Father in heaven, and it would seem as if the effect of this was to form and to perpetuate in them the moral likeness of Himself, and that they reflect back upon Him His own image, and that thus a diffused resemblance to the Godhead is kept up amongst all those adoring worshippers who live in the near and rejoicing contemplation of the Godhead. Mark then how that peculiar and endearing feature in the goodness of the Deity, which we have

just now adverted to—mark how beautifully it is reflected downwards upon us in the revealed attitude of angels. From the high eminences of heaven, are they bending a wakeful regard over the men of this sinful world; and the repentance of every one of them spreads a joy and a high gratulation throughout all its dwelling-places. Put this trait of the angelic character into contrast with the dark and lowering spirit of an Infidel. He is told of the multitude of other worlds, and he feels a kindling magnificence in the conception, and he is seduced by an elevation which he cannot carry, and from this airy summit does he look down on the insignificance of the world we occupy, and pronounces it to be unworthy of those visits and of those attentions which we read of in the New Testament. He is unable to wing his upward way along the scale, either of moral or of natural perfection; and when the wonderful extent of the field is made known to him, over which the wealth of the Divinity is lavished—there he stops, and wilders, and altogether misses this essential perception, that the power and perfection of the Divinity are not more displayed by the mere magnitude of the field, than they are by that minute and exquisite filling up, which leaves not its smallest portions neglected; but which imprints the fulness of the Godhead upon every one of them; and proves, by every flower of the pathless desert, as well as by every orb of immensity, how this unsearchable Being can care for all, and provide for all, and, throned in mystery too high for us, can, throughout every instant of time, keep His attentive eye on every separate thing that He has formed, and, by an act of His thoughtful and presiding intelligence, can constantly embrace all.

But God, compassed about as He is with light inaccessible, and full of glory, lies so hidden from the ken and conception of all our faculties, that the spirit of man sinks exhausted by its attempts to comprehend Him. Could the image of the Supreme be placed direct before the eye of the mind, that flood of splendour, which is ever issuing from Him on all who have the privilege of beholding, would not only dazzle, but overpower us. And therefore it is, that we bid you look to the reflection of that image, and thus to take a view of its mitigated glories, and to gather the lineaments of the Godhead in the face of those righteous angels, who have never thrown away from them the resemblance in which they were created; and, unable as you are to support the grace and the majesty of that countenance,

before which the seers and the prophets of other days fell, and became as dead men, let us, before we bring this argument to a close, borrow one lesson of Him who sitteth on the throne, from the aspect and the revealed doings of those who are surrounding it.

The Infidel, then, as he widens the field of his contemplations, would suffer its every separate object to die away into forgetfulness: these angels, expatiating as they do, over the range of a loftier universality, are represented as all awake to the history of each of its distinct and subordinate provinces. The Infidel, with his mind afloat among suns and among systems, can find no place in his already occupied regards, for that humble planet which lodges and accommodates our species: the angels, standing on a loftier summit, and with a mightier prospect of creation before them, are yet represented as looking down on this single world, and attentively marking the every feeling and the every demand of all its families. The Infidel, by sinking us down to an unnoticeable minuteness, would lose sight of our dwelling-place altogether, and spread a darkening shroud of oblivion over all the concerns and all the interests of men: but the angels will not so abandon us; and, undazzled by the whole surpassing grandeur of that scenery which is around them, are they revealed as directing all the fulness of their regard to this our habitation, and casting a longing and a benignant eye on ourselves and on our children. The Infidel will tell us of those worlds which roll afar, and the number of which outstrips the arithmetic of the human understanding—and then, with the hardness of an unfeeling calculation, will he consign the one we occupy, with all its guilty generations, to despair. But He who counts the number of the stars is set forth to us as looking at every inhabitant among the millions of our species, and by the word of the Gospel beckoning to him with the hand of invitation, and on the very first step of his return, as moving towards him with all the eagerness of the prodigal's father, to receive him back again into that presence from which he had wandered. And as to this world, in favour of which the scowling Infidel will not permit one solitary movement, all heaven is represented as in a stir about its restoration; and there cannot a single son, or a single daughter, be recalled from sin unto righteousness, without an acclamation of joy amongst the hosts of Paradise. Ay, and we can say it of the humblest and the unworthiest of you all, that the eye of angels is upon him, and that his repent-

ance would, at this moment, send forth a wave of delighted sensibility throughout the mighty throng of their innumerable legions.

Now, the single question we have to ask is, On which of the two sides of this contrast do we see most of the impress of heaven? Which of the two would be most glorifying to God? Which of them carries upon it most of that evidence which lies in its having a celestial character? For if it be the side of the Infidel, then must all our hopes expire with the ratifying of that fatal sentence, by which the world is doomed, through its insignificance, to perpetual exclusion from the attentions of the God-head. We have long been knocking at the door of your understanding, and have tried to find an admittance to it for many an argument. We now make our appeal to the sensibilities of your heart; and tell us to whom does the moral feeling within it yield its readiest testimony—to the Infidel, who would make this world of ours vanish away into abandonment—or to those angels, who ring throughout all their mansions the hosannas of joy, over every one individual of its repentant population?

And here we cannot omit to take advantage of that opening with which our Saviour has furnished us, by the parables of this chapter, and by which He admits us into a familiar view of that principle on which the inhabitants of the heavens are so awake to the deliverance and the restoration of our species. To illustrate the difference in the reach of knowledge and of affection, between a man and an angel, let us think of the difference of reach between one man and another. You may often witness a man, who feels neither tenderness nor care beyond the precincts of his own family; but who, on the strength of those instinctive fondnesses which nature has implanted in his bosom, may earn the character of an amiable father, or a kind husband, or a bright example of all that is soft and endearing in the relations of domestic society. Now conceive him, in addition to all this, to carry his affections abroad, without, at the same time, any abatement of their intensity towards the objects which are at home—that, stepping across the limits of the house he occupies, he takes an interest in the families which are near him—that he lends his services to the town or the district wherein he is placed, and gives up a portion of his time to the thoughtful labours of a humane and public-spirited citizen. By this enlargement in the sphere of his attention, he has extended his reach; and, provided he has not done so at the expense of that

regard which is due to his family, a thing which, cramped and confined as we are, we are very apt, in the exercise of our humble faculties, to do—I put it to you, whether by extending the reach of his views and his affections, he has not extended his worth and his moral respectability along with it?

But we can conceive a still farther enlargement. We can figure to ourselves a man, whose wakeful sympathy overflows the field of his own immediate neighbourhood—to whom the name of country comes with all the omnipotence of a charm upon his heart, and with all the urgency of a most righteous and resistless claim upon his services—who never hears the name of Britain sounded in his ears, but it stirs up all his enthusiasm in behalf of the worth and the welfare of his people—who gives himself up, with all the devotedness of a passion, to the best and the purest objects of patriotism—and who, spurning away from him the vulgarities of party ambition, separates his life and his labours to the fine pursuit of augmenting the science, or the virtue, or the substantial prosperity of his nation. Oh, could such a man retain all the tenderness, and fulfil all the duties which home and which neighbourhood require of him, and at the same time expatiate in the might of his untired faculties, on so wide a field of benevolent contemplation—would not this extension of reach place him still higher than before on the scale both of moral and intellectual gradation, and give him a still brighter and more enduring name in the records of human excellence?

And lastly, we can conceive a still loftier flight of humanity—a man, the aspiring of whose heart for the good of man, knows no limitations—whose longings and whose conceptions on this subject, overleap all the barriers of geography—who looking on himself as a brother of the species, links every spare energy which belongs to him, with the cause of its amelioration—who can embrace within the grasp of his ample desires, the whole family of mankind—and who, in obedience to a heaven-born movement of principle within him, separates himself to some big and busy enterprise, which is to tell on the moral destinies of the world. Oh, could such a man mix up the softenings of private virtue, with the habit of so sublime a comprehension—if, amid those magnificent darings of thought and of performance, the mildness of his benignant eye could still continue to cheer the retreat of his family, and to spread the charm and the sacredness of piety among all its members—could he even

mingle himself in all the gentleness of a soothed and a smiling heart, with the playfulness of his children—and also find strength to shed the blessings of his presence and his counsel over the vicinity around him ;—oh, would not the combination of so much grace with so much loftiness, only serve the more to aggrandize him ? Would not the one ingredient of a character so rare, go to illustrate and to magnify the other ? And would not you pronounce him to be the fairest specimen of our nature, who could so call out all your tenderness, while he challenged and compelled all your veneration ?

Nor can we proceed, at this point of our argument, without adverting to the way in which this last and this largest style of benevolence is exemplified in our own country—where the spirit of the Gospel has given to many of its enlightened disciples the impulse of such a philanthropy, as carries abroad their wishes and their endeavours to the very outskirts of human population—a philanthropy, of which, if you asked the extent or the boundary of its field, we should answer in the language of inspiration, that the field is the world—a philanthropy which overlooks all the distinctions of caste and of colour, and spreads its ample regards over the whole brotherhood of the species—a philanthropy which attaches itself to man in the general ; to man, throughout all his varieties ; to man as the partaker of one common nature, and who, in whatever clime or latitude you may meet with him, is found to breathe the same sympathies, and to possess the same high capabilities both of bliss and of improvement. It is true, that, upon this subject, there is often a loose and unsettled magnificence of thought, which is fruitful of nothing but empty speculation. But the men to whom we allude, have not imaged the enterprise in the form of a thing unknown. They have given it a local habitation. They have bodied it forth in deed and in accomplishment. They have turned the dream into a reality. In them, the power of a lofty generalization meets with its happiest attemperment, in the principle and perseverance, and all the chastening and subduing virtues of the New Testament. And were we in search of that fine union of grace and of greatness which we have now been insisting on, and in virtue of which the enlightened Christian can at once find room in his bosom for the concerns of universal humanity, and for the play of kindness towards every individual he meets with—we could nowhere more readily expect to find it, than with the worthies of our own land—the Howard of a former genera-



tion, who paced it over Europe in quest of the unseen wretchedness which abounds in it—or in such men of our present generation, as Wilberforce, who lifted his unwearied voice against the biggest outrage ever practised on our nature, till he wrought its extermination—and Clarkson, who plied his assiduous task at rearing the materials of its impressive history, and, at length carried, for this righteous cause, the mind of Parliament—and Carey, from whose hand the generations of the East are now receiving the elements of their moral renovation—and, in fine, those holy and devoted men, who count not their lives dear unto them ; but, going forth every year from the island of our habitation, carry the message of heaven over the face of the world ; and, in the front of severest obloquy, are now labouring in remotest lands ; and are reclaiming another and another portion from the wastes of dark and fallen humanity ; and are widening the domains of gospel light and gospel principle amongst them ; and are spreading a moral beauty around the every spot on which they pitched their lowly tabernacle ; and are at length compelling even the eye and the testimony of gainsayers, by the success of their noble enterprise ; and are forcing the exclamation of delighted surprise from the charmed and the arrested traveller, as he looks at the softening tints which they are now spreading over the wilderness, and as he hears the sound of the chapel bell, and as in those haunts where, at the distance of half a generation, savages would have scowled upon his path, he regales himself with the hum of missionary schools, and the lovely spectacle of peaceful and Christian villages.

Such, then, is the benevolence, at once so gentle and so lofty, of those men, who, sanctified by the faith that is in Jesus, have had their hearts visited from heaven by a beam of warmth and of sacredness. What, then, we should like to know, is the benevolence of the place from whence such an influence cometh ? How wide is the compass of this virtue there, and how exquisite is the feeling of its tenderness, and how pure and how fervent are its aspirings among those unfallen beings who have no darkness, and no encumbering weight of corruption to strive against ? Angels have a mightier reach of contemplation. Angels can look upon this world and all which it inherits, as the part of a larger family. Angels were in the full exercise of their powers even at the first infancy of our species, and shared in the gratulations of that period, when, at the birth of humanity, all intelligent nature felt a gladdening impulse, and the morning stars

sang together for joy. They loved us even with the love which a family on earth bears to a younger sister; and the very childhood of our tinier faculties did only serve the more to endear us to them; and though born at a later hour in the history of creation, did they regard us as heirs of the same destiny with themselves, to rise along with them in the scale of moral elevation, to bow at the same footstool, and to partake in those high dispensations of a parent's kindness and a parent's care, which are ever emanating from the throne of the Eternal on all the members of a duteous and affectionate family. Take the reach of an angel's mind, but, at the same time, take the seraphic fervour of an angel's benevolence along with it; how, from the eminence on which he stands, he may have an eye upon many worlds, and a remembrance upon the origin and the successive concerns of every one of them; how he may feel the full force of a most affecting relationship with the inhabitants of each, as the offspring of one common Father; and though it be both the effect and the evidence of our depravity, that we cannot sympathize with these pure and generous ardours of a celestial spirit; how it may consist with the lofty comprehension, and the ever-breathing love of an angel, that he can both shoot his benevolence abroad over a mighty expanse of planets and of systems, and lavish a flood of tenderness on each individual of their teeming population.

Keep all this in view, and you cannot fail to perceive how the principle, so finely and so copiously illustrated in this chapter, may be brought to meet the infidelity we have thus long been employed in combating. It was nature, and the experience of every bosom will affirm it—it was nature in the shepherd to leave the ninety and nine of his flock forgotten and alone in the wilderness, and betaking himself to the mountains, to give all his labour and all his concern to the pursuit of one solitary wanderer. It was nature—and we are told in the passage before us, that it is such a portion of nature as belongs not merely to men but to angels—when the woman, with her mind in a state of listlessness as to the nine pieces of silver that were in secure custody, turned the whole force of her anxiety to the one piece which she had lost, and for which she had to light a candle, and to sweep the house, and to search diligently until she found it. It was nature in her to rejoice more over that piece than over all the rest of them, and to tell it abroad among friends and neighbours, that they might rejoice along with her—ay, and

sadly effaced as humanity is, in all her original lineaments, this is a part of our nature, the very movements of which are experienced in heaven, "where there is more joy over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." For anything we know, the very planet that rolls in the immensity around us may be a land of righteousness; and be a member of the household of God; and have her secure dwelling-place within that ample limit, which embraces His great and universal family. But we know at least of one wanderer; and how wofully she has strayed from peace and from purity; and how in dreary alienation from Him who made her, she has bewildered herself amongst those many devious tracts, which have carried her afar from the path of immortality; and how sadly tarnished all those beauties and felicities are, which promised, on that morning of her existence when God looked on her, and saw that all was very good—which promised so richly to bless and adorn her; and how, in the eye of the whole un-fallen creation, she has renounced all this goodness, and is fast departing away from them into guilt, and wretchedness, and shame. Oh! if there be any truth in this chapter, and any sweet or touching nature in the principle which runs throughout all its parables, let us cease to wonder though they who surround the throne of love should be looking so intently towards us—or though, in the way by which they have singled us out, all the other orbs of space should, for one short season, on the scale of eternity, appear to be forgotten—or though, for every step of her recovery, and for every individual who is rendered back again to the fold from which he was separated, another and another message of triumph should be made to circulate amongst the hosts of paradise—or though, lost as we are, and sunk in depravity as we are, all the sympathies of heaven should now be awake on the enterprise of Him who has travailed in the greatness of His strength to seek and to save us.

And here we cannot but remark how fine a harmony there is between the law of sympathetic nature in heaven, and the most touching exhibitions of it on the face of our world. When one of a numerous household droops under the power of disease, is not that the one to whom all the tenderness is turned, and who, in a manner, monopolizes the inquiries of his neighbourhood, and the care of his family? When the sighing of the midnight storm sends a dismal foreboding into the mother's heart, to whom of all her offspring, we would ask, are her thoughts and

anxieties then wandering? Is it not to her sailor boy whom her fancy has placed amid the rude and angry surges of the ocean? Does not this, the hour of his apprehended danger, concentrate upon him the whole force of her wakeful meditations? And does not he engross, for a season, her every sensibility and her every prayer? We sometimes hear of shipwrecked passengers thrown upon a barbarous shore; and seized upon by its prowling inhabitants; and hurried away through the tracks of a dreary and unknown wilderness; and sold into captivity; and loaded with the fetters of irrecoverable bondage; and who, stripped of every other liberty but the liberty of thought, feel even this to be another ingredient of wretchedness; for what can they think of but home? and as all its kind and tender imagery comes upon their remembrance, how can they think of it but in the bitterness of despair? Oh tell us, when the fame of all this disaster reaches his family, who is the member of it to whom is directed the full tide of its griefs and of its sympathies? Who is it that, for weeks and for months, usurps their every feeling, and calls out their largest sacrifices, and sets them to the busiest expedients for getting him back again? Who is it that makes them forgetful of themselves and of all around them? and tell us if you can assign a limit to the pains, and the exertions, and the surrenders which afflicted parents and weeping sisters would make to seek and to save him?

Now conceive, as we are warranted to do by the parables of this chapter, the principle of all these earthly exhibitions to be in full operation around the throne of God. Conceive the universe to be one secure and rejoicing family, and that this alienated world is the only strayed, or only captive member belonging to it; and we shall cease to wonder, that, from the first period of the captivity of our species, down to the consummation of their history in time, there should be such a movement in heaven; or that angels should so often have sped their commissioned way on the errand of our recovery; or that the Son of God should have bowed Himself down to the burden of our mysterious atonement; or that the Spirit of God should now, by the busy variety of His all-powerful influences, be carrying forward that dispensation of grace which is to make us meet for readmittance into the mansions of the celestial. Only think of love as the reigning principle there; of love, as sending forth its energies and aspirations to the quarter where its object is most in danger of being for ever lost to it; of love, as called forth by this single

circumstance to its uttermost exertion, and the most exquisite feeling of its tenderness; and then shall we come to a distinct and familiar explanation of this whole mystery; nor shall we resist, by our incredulity, the gospel message any longer, though it tells us, that throughout the whole of this world's history, long in our eyes, but only a little month in the high periods of immortality, so much of the vigilance, and so much of the earnestness of heaven, should have been expended on the recovery of its guilty population.

There is another touching trait of nature, which goes finely to heighten this principle, and still more forcibly to demonstrate its application to our present argument. So long as the dying child of David was alive, he was kept on the stretch of anxiety and of suffering with regard to it. When it expired, he arose and comforted himself. This narrative of king David is in harmony with all that we experience of our own movements and our own sensibilities. It is the power of uncertainty which gives them so active and so interesting a play in our bosoms; and which heightens all our regards to a tenfold pitch of feeling and of exercise; and which fixes down our watchfulness upon our infant's dying bed; and which keeps us so painfully alive to every turn and to every symptom in the progress of its malady; and which draws out all our affections for it to a degree of intensity that is quite unutterable; and which urges us on to ply our every effort and our every expedient, till hope withdraw its lingering beam, or till death shut the eyes of our beloved in the slumber of its long and its last repose.

We know not who of you have your names written in the book of life—nor can we tell if this be known to the angels which are in heaven. While in the land of living men, you are under the power and application of a remedy, which, if taken as the gospel prescribes, will renovate the soul, and altogether prepare it for the bloom and the vigour of immortality. Wonder not then, that with this principle of uncertainty in such full operation, ministers should feel for you; or angels should feel for you; or all the sensibilities of heaven should be awake upon the symptoms of your grace and reformation; or the eyes of those who stand upon the high eminences of the celestial world, should be so earnestly fixed on every footstep and new evolution of your moral history. Such a consideration as this should do something more than silence the Infidel objection. It should give a practical effect to the calls of repentance. How will it go to

aggravate the whole guilt of our impenitency, should we stand out against the power and the tenderness of these manifold applications—the voice of a beseeching God upon us—the word of salvation at our very door—the free offer of strength and of acceptance sounded in our hearing—the Spirit in readiness with His agency to meet our every desire and our every inquiry—angels beckoning us to their company—and the very first movements of our awakened conscience drawing upon us all their regards and all their earnestness !

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SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITIES.

And Nathan departed unto his house : and the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child ; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth : but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead ; for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice : how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead ? But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead ; therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead ? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped : then he came to his own house ; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done ? Thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive ; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept : for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live ? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast ? can I bring him back again ? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.—2 Sam. xii. 15-23.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.—Psalm xxxiv. 7.

For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.—Psalm xci. 11.

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.—Matt. xxiv. 31.

Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.—Luke xv. 10.

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ?—Heb. i. 14.

## DISCOURSE VI.

ON THE CONTEST FOR AN ASCENDENCY OVER MAN AMONGST THE HIGHER ORDERS  
OF INTELLIGENCE.

“ And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly,  
triumphing over them in it.”—*COLOSSIANS* ii. 15.

THOUGH these Astronomical Discourses be now drawing to a close, it is not because we feel that much more might not be said on the subject of them, both in the way of argument and of illustration. The whole of the Infidel difficulty proceeds upon the assumption, that the exclusive bearing of Christianity is upon the people of our earth; that this solitary planet is in no way implicated with the concerns of a wider dispensation; that the revelation we have of the dealings of God in this district of His empire, does not suit and subordinate itself to a system of moral administration, as extended as is the whole of His monarchy. Or, in other words, because Infidels have not access to the whole truth, will they refuse a part of it, however well attested or well accredited it may be; because a mantle of deep obscurity rests on the government of God, when taken in all its eternity and all its entireness, will they shut their eyes against that allowance of light which has been made to pass downwards upon our world from time to time through so many partial unfoldings; and till they are made to know the share which other planets have in these communications of mercy, will they turn them away from the actual message which has come to their own door, and will neither examine its credentials, nor be alarmed by its warnings, nor be won by the tenderness of its invitations?

On that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, there will be found such a wilful duplicity and darkening of the mind in the whole of this proceeding, as shall bring down upon it the burden of a righteous condemnation. But even now does it lie open to the rebuke of philosophy, when the soundness and

the consistency of her principles are brought faithfully to bear upon it. Were the character of modern science rightly understood, it would be seen, that the very thing which gave such strength and sureness to all her conclusions, was that humility of spirit which belonged to her. She promulgates all that is positively known; but she maintains the strictest silence and modesty about all that is unknown. She thankfully accepts of evidence wherever it can be found; nor does she spurn away from her the very humblest contribution of such doctrine, as can be witnessed by human observation, or can be attested by human veracity. But with all this she can hold out most sternly against that power of eloquence and fancy, which often throws so bewitching a charm over the plausibilities of ingenious speculation. Truth is the alone idol of her reverence; and did she at all times keep by her attachments, nor throw them away when theology submitted to her cognisance its demonstrations and its claims, we should not despair of witnessing as great a revolution in those prevailing habitudes of thought which obtain throughout our literary establishments, on the subject of Christianity, as that which has actually taken place in the views which obtain on the philosophy of external nature. This is the first field on which have been successfully practised the experimental lessons of Bacon; and they who are conversant with these matters, know how great and how general a uniformity of doctrine now prevails in the science of astronomy, and mechanics, and chemistry, and almost all the other departments in the history and philosophy of matter. But this uniformity stands strikingly contrasted with the diversity of our moral systems, with the restless fluctuations both of language and of sentiment which are taking place in the philosophy of mind, with the palpable fact, that every new course of instruction upon this subject has some new articles, or some new explanations to peculiarize it: and all this is to be attributed, not to the progress of the science, not to a growing, but to an alternating movement, not to its perpetual additions, but to its perpetual vibrations.

We mean not to assert the futility of moral science, or to deny her importance, or to insist on the utter hopelessness of her advancement. The Baconian method will not probably push forward her discoveries with such a rapidity, or to such an extent, as many of her sanguine disciples have anticipated. But if the spirit and the maxims of this philosophy were at all times



proceeded upon, it would certainly check that rashness and variety of excogitation, in virtue of which it may almost be said, that every new course presents us with a new system, and that every new teacher has some singularity or other to characterize him. She may be able to make out an exact transcript of the phenomena of mind, and in so doing, she yields a most important contribution to the stock of human acquirements. But, when she attempts to grope her darkling way through the counsels of the Deity, and the futurities of His administration; when, without one passing acknowledgment to the embassy which professes to have come from Him, or to the facts and to the testimonies by which it has so illustriously been vindicated, she launches forth her own speculations on the character of God, and the destiny of man; when, though this be a subject on which neither the recollections of history, nor the ephemeral experience of any single life, can furnish one observation to enlighten her, she will nevertheless utter her own plausibilities, not merely with a contemptuous neglect of the Bible, but in direct opposition to it; then it is high time to remind her of the difference between the reverie of him who has not seen God, and the well-accredited declaration of Him who was in the beginning with God, and was God: and to tell her, that this, so far from being the argument of an ignoble fanaticism, is in harmony with the very argument upon which the science of experiment has been reared, and by which it has been at length delivered from the influence of theory, and purified of all its vain and visionary splendours.

In our last Discourses, we have attempted to collect, from the records of God's actual communication to the world, such traces of relationship between other orders of being and the great family of mankind, as serve to prove that Christianity is not so paltry and provincial a system as Infidelity presumes it to be. And as we said before, we have not exhausted all that may legitimately be derived upon this subject from the informations of Scripture. We have adverted, it is true, to the knowledge of our moral history which obtains throughout other provinces of the intelligent creation. We have asserted the universal importance which this may confer on the transactions even of one planet, inasmuch as it may spread an honourable display of the Godhead amongst all the mansions of infinity. We have attempted to expatiate on the argument, that an event little in itself, may be so pregnant with character, as to furnish

all the worshippers of heaven with a theme of praise for eternity. We have stated that nothing is of magnitude in their eyes, but that which serves to endear to them the Father of their spirits, or to shed a lustre over the glory of His incomprehensible attributes—and that thus, from the redemption even of our solitary species, there may go forth such an exhibition of the Deity, as shall bear the triumphs of His name to the very outskirts of the universe.

We have farther adverted to another distinct scriptural intimation, that the state of fallen man was not only matter of knowledge to other orders of creation, but was also matter of deep regret and affectionate sympathy; that agreeably to such laws of sympathy as are most familiar even to human observation, the very wretchedness of our condition was fitted to concentrate upon us the feelings, and the attentions, and the services of the celestial—to single us out for a time to the gaze of their most earnest and unceasing contemplation—to draw forth all that was kind and all that was tender within them—and just in proportion to the need and to the helplessness of us miserable exiles from the family of God, to multiply upon us the regards, and call out in our behalf the fond and eager exertions of those who had never wandered away from Him. This appears from the Bible to be the style of that benevolence which glows and which circulates around the throne of heaven. It is the very benevolence which emanates from the throne itself, and the attentions of which have for so many thousand years signalized the inhabitants of our world. This may look a long period for so paltry a world. But how have Infidels come to their conception that our world is so paltry? By looking abroad over the countless systems of immensity. But why then have they missed the conception, that the time of those peculiar visitations, which they look upon as so disproportionate to the magnitude of this earth, is just as evanescent as the earth itself is insignificant? Why look they not abroad on the countless generations of eternity; and thus come back to the conclusion, that after all, the redemption of our species is but an ephemeral doing in the history of intelligent nature; that it leaves the Author of it room for all the accomplishments of a wise and equal administration; and not to mention, that even during the progress of it, it withdraws not a single thought or a single energy of His, from other fields of creation, that there remains time enough to Him for carrying round the visitations of as striking and as

peculiar a tenderness, over the whole extent of His great and universal monarchy ?

It might serve still farther to incorporate the concerns of our planet with the general history of moral and intelligent beings, to state, not merely the knowledge which they take of us, and not merely the compassionate anxiety which they feel for us ; but to state the importance derived to our world from its being the actual theatre of a keen and ambitious contest amongst the upper orders of creation. You know that for the possession of a very small and insulated territory, the mightiest empires of the world have put forth all their resources ; and on some field of mustering competition, have monarchs met, and embarked for victory, all the pride of a country's talent, and all the flower and strength of a country's population. The solitary island around which so many fleets are hovering, and on the shores of which so many armed men are descending as to an arena of hostility, may well wonder at its own unlooked-for estimation. But other principles are animating the battle ; and the glory of nations is at stake ; and a much higher result is in the contemplation of each party, than the gain of so humble an acquirement as the primary object of the war ; and honour, dearer to many a bosom than existence, is now the interest on which so much blood and so much treasure is expended ; and the stirring spirit of emulation has now got hold of the combatants ; and thus, amid all the insignificancy which attaches to the material origin of the contest, do both the eagerness and the extent of it, receive from the constitution of our nature their most full and adequate explanation.

Now, if this be also the principle of higher natures—if, on the one hand, God be jealous of His honour ; and, on the other, there be proud and exalted spirits who scowl defiance at Him and at His monarchy—if, on the side of heaven, there be an angelic host rallying around the standard of loyalty, who flee with alacrity at the bidding of the Almighty, who are devoted to His glory, and feel a rejoicing interest in the evolution of His counsels ; and if, on the side of hell, there be a sullen front of resistance, a hate and malice inextinguishable, an unquelled daring of revenge to baffle the wisdom of the Eternal, and to arrest the hand, and to defeat the purposes of Omnipotence—then let the material prize of victory be insignificant as it may, it is the victory in itself which upholds the impulse of this keen and stimulated rivalry. If, by the sagacity of one infernal

mind, a single planet has been seduced from its allegiance, and been brought under the ascendancy of him who is called in Scripture, "the god of this world;" and if the errand on which our Redeemer came was to destroy the works of the devil—then let this planet have all the littleness which astronomy has assigned to it—call it what it is, one of the smaller islets which float on the ocean of vacancy; it has become the theatre of such a competition, as may have all the desires and all the energies of a divided universe embarked upon it. It involves in it other objects than the single recovery of our species. It decides higher questions. It stands linked with the supremacy of God, and will at length demonstrate the way in which He inflicts chastisement and overthrow upon all His enemies. We know not if our rebellious world be the only stronghold which Satan is possessed of, or if it be but the single post of an extended warfare, that is now going on between the powers of light and of darkness. But be it the one or the other, the parties are in array, and the spirit of the contest is in full energy, and the honour of mighty combatants is at stake; and let us therefore cease to wonder that our humble residence has been made the theatre of so busy an operation, or that the ambition of loftier natures has here put forth all its desire and all its strenuousness.

This unfolds to us another of those high and extensive bearings, which the moral history of our globe may have on the system of God's universal administration. Were an enemy to touch the shore of this high-minded country, and to occupy so much as one of the humblest of its villages, and there to seduce the natives from their loyalty, and to sit down along with them in entrenched defiance to all the threats, and to all the preparations of an insulted empire—oh, how would the cry of wounded pride resound throughout all the ranks and varieties of our mighty population; and this very movement of indignancy would reach the king upon his throne; and circulate among those who stood in all the grandeur of chieftainship around him; and be heard to thrill in the eloquence of Parliament; and spread so resistless an appeal to a nation's honour and a nation's patriotism, that the trumpet of war would summon to its call all the spirit and all the willing energies of our kingdom; and rather than sit down in patient endurance under the burning disgrace of such a violation, would the whole of its strength and resources be embarked upon the contest; and

never, never would we let down our exertions and our sacrifices, till either our deluded countrymen were reclaimed, or till the whole of this offence were, by one righteous act of vengeance, swept away altogether from the face of the territory it deformed.

The Bible is always most full and most explanatory on those points of revelation in which men are personally interested. But it does at times offer a dim transparency, through which may be caught a partial view of such designs and of such enterprises as are now afloat among the upper orders of intelligence. It tells us of a mighty struggle that is now going on for a moral ascendancy over the hearts of this world's population. It tells us that our race were seduced from their allegiance to God, by the plotting sagacity of one who stands pre-eminent against Him among the hosts of a very wide and extended rebellion. It tells us of the Captain of salvation, who undertook to spoil him of this triumph; and throughout the whole of that magnificent train of prophecy which points to Him, does it describe the work he had to do, as a conflict, in which strength was to be put forth, and painful suffering to be endured, and fury to be poured upon enemies, and principalities to be dethroned, and all those toils, and dangers, and difficulties to be borne, which strewed the path of perseverance that was to carry him to victory.

But it is a contest of skill as well as of strength and of influence. There is the earnest competition of angelic faculties embarked on this struggle for ascendancy. And while in the Bible there is recorded (faintly and partially, we admit) the deep and insidious policy that is practised on the one side; we are also told, that, on the plan of our world's restoration, there are lavished all the riches of an unsearchable wisdom upon the other. It would appear that, for the accomplishment of his purpose, the great enemy of God and of man plied his every calculation; and brought all the devices of his deep and settled malignity to bear upon our species; and thought, that could he involve us in sin, every attribute of the Divinity stood staked to the banishment of our race from beyond the limits of the empire of righteousness; and thus did he practise his invasions on the moral territory of the unfallen; and, glorying in his success, did he fancy and feel that he had achieved a permanent separation between the God who sitteth in heaven, and one at least of the planetary mansions which He had reared.

The errand of the Saviour was to restore this sinful world, and have its people readmitted within the circle of heaven's pure and righteous family. But in the government of heaven, as well as in the government of earth, there are certain principles which cannot be compromised; and certain maxims of administration which must never be departed from; and a certain character of majesty and of truth, on which the taint even of the slightest violation can never be permitted; and a certain authority which must be upheld by the immutability of all its sanctions, and the unerring fulfilment of all its wise and righteous proclamations. All this was in the mind of the archangel, and a gleam of malignant joy shot athwart him, as he conceived his project for hemming our unfortunate species within the bound of an irrecoverable dilemma; and as surely as sin and holiness could not enter into fellowship, so surely did he think, that if man were seduced to disobedience, would the truth, and the justice, and the immutability of God, lay their insurmountable barriers on the path of his future acceptance.

It was only in that plan of recovery of which Jesus Christ was the author and the finisher, that the great adversary of our species met with a wisdom which overmatched him. It is true, that he had reared, in the guilt to which he seduced us, a mighty obstacle in the way of this lofty undertaking. But when the grand expedient was announced, and the blood of that atonement, by which sinners are brought nigh, was willingly offered to be shed for us; and the eternal Son, to carry this mystery into accomplishment, assumed our nature—then was the prince of that mighty rebellion, in which the fate and the history of our world are so deeply implicated, in visible alarm for the safety of all his acquisitions:—nor can the record of this wondrous history carry forward its narrative without furnishing some transient glimpses of a sublime and a superior warfare, in which, for the prize of a spiritual dominion over our species, we may dimly perceive the contest of loftiest talent, and all the designs of heaven in behalf of man, met at every point of their evolution, by the counterworkings of a rival strength and a rival sagacity.

We there read of a struggle which the Captain of our salvation had to sustain, when the lustre of the Godhead lay obscured, and the strength of its omnipotence was mysteriously weighed down under the infirmities of our nature—how Satan singled Him out, and dared Him to the combat of the wilderness—how all his wiles and all his influences were resisted—

how he left our Saviour in all the triumphs of unsubdued loyalty—how the progress of this mighty achievement is marked by the every character of a conflict—how many of the gospel miracles were so many direct infringements on the power and empire of a great spiritual rebellion—how, in one precious season of gladness among the few which brightened the dark career of our Saviour's humiliation, He rejoiced in spirit, and gave as the cause of it to His disciples, that "He saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven"—how the momentary advantages that were gotten over Him, are ascribed to the agency of this infernal being, who entered the heart of Judas, and tempted the disciple to betray his Master and his Friend. We know that we are treading on the confines of mystery. We cannot tell what the battle that He fought. We cannot compute the terror or the strength of His enemies. We cannot say, for we have not been told, how it was that they stood in marshalled and hideous array against Him:—nor can we measure how great the firm daring of His soul when He tasted that cup in all its bitterness which He prayed might pass away from Him; when, with the feeling that He was forsaken by His God, He trode the wine-press alone; when He entered single-handed upon that dreary period of agony, and insult, and death, in which, from the garden to the cross, He had to bear the burden of a world's atonement. We cannot speak in our own language, but we can say in the language of the Bible, of the days and the nights of this great enterprise, that it was the season of the travail of His soul; that it was the hour and the power of darkness; that the work of our redemption was a work accompanied by the effort, and the violence, and the fury of a combat; by all the arduousness of a battle in its progress, and all the glories of a victory in its termination: and after He called out that it was finished, after He was loosed from the prison-house of the grave, after He had ascended up on high, He is said to have made captivity captive; and to have spoiled principalities and powers; and to have seen His pleasure upon His enemies; and to have made a show of them openly.

We shall not affect a wisdom above that which is written, by fancying such details of this warfare as the Bible has not laid before us. But surely it is no more than being wise up to that which is written, to assert, that in achieving the redemption of our world, a warfare had to be accomplished; that upon this subject there was, among the higher provinces of creation, the

keen and the animated conflict of opposing interests ; that the result of it involved something grander and more affecting than even the fate of this world's population ; that it decided a question of rivalry between the righteous and everlasting Monarch of universal being, and the prince of a great and widely-extended rebellion, of which we neither know how vast is the magnitude, nor how important and diversified are the bearings : and thus do we gather, from this consideration, another distinct argument, helping us to explain why, on the salvation of our solitary species, so much attention appears to have been concentrated, and so much energy appears to have been expended.

But it would appear from the Records of Inspiration, that the contest is not yet ended ; that on the one hand the Spirit of God is employed in making, for the truths of Christianity, a way into the human heart, with all the power of an effectual demonstration ; that on the other, there is a spirit now abroad, which worketh in the children of disobedience : that on the one hand, the Holy Ghost is calling men out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel ; and that on the other hand, he who is styled the god of this world, is blinding their hearts, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should enter into them : that they who are under the dominion of the one are said to have overcome, because greater is He that is in them than he that is in the world ; and that they who are under the dominion of the other, are said to be the children of the devil, and to be under his snare, and to be taken captive by him at his will. How these respective powers do operate, is one question ; the fact of their operation, is another. We abstain from the former. We attach ourselves to the latter, and gather from it, that the prince of darkness still walketh abroad amongst us ; that he is still working his insidious policy, if not with the vigorous inspiration of hope, at least with the frantic energies of despair ; that while the overtures of reconciliation are made to circulate through the world, he is plying all his devices to deafen and to extinguish the impression of them ; or, in other words, while a process of invitation and of argument has emanated from heaven, for reclaiming men to their loyalty—the process is resisted at all its points, by one who is putting forth his every expedient, and wielding a mysterious ascendancy, to seduce, and to intral them.

To an infidel ear, all this carries the sound of something wild and visionary along with it. But though only known through



the medium of revelation ; after it is known, who can fail to recognise its harmony with the great lineaments of human experience ? Who has not felt the workings of a rivalry within him, between the power of conscience and the power of temptation ? Who does not remember those seasons of retirement, when the calculations of eternity had gotten a momentary command over the heart ; and time, with all its interests and all its vexations, had dwindled into insignificancy before them ? And who does not remember, how, upon his actual engagement with the objects of time, they resumed a control, as great and as omnipotent, as if all the importance of eternity adhered to them—how they emitted from them such an impression upon his feelings as to fix and to fascinate the whole man into a subserviency to their influence—how in spite of every lesson of their worthlessness, brought home to him at every turn by the rapidity of the seasons, and the vicissitudes of life, and the ever-moving progress of his own earthly career, and the visible ravages of death among his acquaintances around him, and the desolations of his family, and the constant breaking up of his system of friendships, and the affecting spectacle of all that lives and is in motion, withering and hastening to the grave ;—oh ! how comes it, that, in the face of all this experience, the whole elevation of purpose, conceived in the hour of his better understanding, should be dissipated and forgotten ? Whence the might, and whence the mystery of that spell, which so binds and so infatuates us to the world ? What prompts us so to embark the whole strength of our eagerness and of our desires, in pursuit of interests which we know a few little years will bring to utter annihilation ? Who is it that imparts to them all the charm and all the colour of an unfailling durability ? Who is it that throws such an air of stability over these earthly tabernacles, as makes them look to the fascinated eye of man, like resting-places for eternity ? Who is it that so pictures out the objects of sense, and so magnifies the range of their future enjoyment, and so dazzles the fond and deceived imagination, that, in looking onward through our earthly career, it appears like the vista, or the perspective, of innumerable ages ? He who is called the god of this world. He who can dress the idleness of its waking dreams in the garb of reality. He who can pour a seducing brilliancy over the panorama of its fleeting pleasures and its vain anticipations. He who can turn it into an instrument of deceitfulness, and make it wield such an absolute ascen-

dency over all the affections, that man, become the poor slave of its idolatries and its charms, puts the authority of conscience and the warnings of the Word of God, and the offered instigations of the Spirit of God, and all the lessons of calculation, and all the wisdom even of his own sound and sober experience, away from him.

But this wondrous contest will come to a close. Some will return to their loyalty, and others will keep by their rebellion; and, in the day of the winding up of the drama of this world's history, there will be made manifest to the myriads of the various orders of creation, both the mercy and vindicated majesty of the Eternal. Oh! on that day how vain will this presumption of the infidel astronomy appear, when the affairs of men come to be examined in the presence of an innumerable company; and beings of loftiest nature are seen to crowd around the judgment-seat; and the Saviour shall appear in our sky, with a celestial retinue, who have come with Him from afar to witness all His doings, and to take a deep and solemn interest in all His dispensations; and the destiny of our species whom the infidel would thus detach in solitary insignificance, from the universe altogether, shall be found to merge and to mingle with higher destinies—the good to spend their eternity with angels—the bad to spend their eternity with angels—the former to be re-admitted into the universal family of God's obedient worshippers—the latter to share in the everlasting pain and ignominy of the defeated host of the rebellious—the people of this planet to be implicated, throughout the whole train of their never-ending history, with the higher ranks and the more extended tribes of intelligence; and thus it is, that the special administration we now live under, shall be seen to harmonize in its bearings, and to accord in its magnificence, with all that extent of nature and of her territories, which modern science has unfolded.

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#### SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITIES.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.—*Matt. iv. 1.*

The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.—*Matt. xiii. 39, 41.*

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—*Matt. xxv. 41.*

And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art: the Holy One of God.—Luke iv. 33, 34.

Those by the way-side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.—Luke viii. 12.

But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.—Luke xi. 17, 18.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.—John viii. 44.

And supper being ended, (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him.)—John xiii. 2.

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?—Acts v. 3.

To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me.—Acts xxvi. 18.

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.—Rom. xvi. 20.

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.—2 Cor. ii. 11.

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.—2 Cor. iv. 4.

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.—Eph. ii. 2.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.—Eph. vi. 11, 12.

For some are already turned aside after Satan.—1 Tim. v. 15.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.—Heb. ii. 14.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.—James iv. 7.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.—1 Pet. v. 8, 9.

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.—In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.—1 John iii. 8, 10.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.—1 John iv. 4.

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.—Jude 6.

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out

his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.—Rev. iii. 5.

And there was war in heaven : Michael and his angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world ; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.—Rev. xii. 7, 8, 9, 12.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.—Rev. xx. 2, 7, 10.

## DISCOURSE VII.

ON THE SLENDER INFLUENCE OF MERE TASTE AND SENSIBILITY IN MATTERS  
OF RELIGION.

“And, lo! thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not.”—  
EZEK. xxxiii. 32.

You easily understand how a taste for music is one thing, and a real submission to the influence of religion is another—how the ear may be regaled by the melody of sound, and the heart may utterly refuse the proper impression of the sense that is conveyed by it—how the sons and daughters of the world may, with their every affection devoted to its perishable vanities, inhale all the delights of enthusiasm, as they sit in crowded assemblage around the deep and solemn oratorio—ay, and whether it be the humility of penitential feeling, or the rapture of grateful acknowledgment, or the sublime of a contemplative piety, or the aspiration of pure and of holy purposes, which breathes throughout the words of the performance, and gives to it all the spirit and all the expression by which it is pervaded, it is a very possible thing, that the moral, and the rational, and the active man, may have given no entrance into his bosom for any of these sentiments; and yet so overpowered may he be by the charm of the vocal conveyance through which they are addressed to him, that he may be made to feel with such an emotion, and to weep with such a tenderness, and to kindle with such a transport, and to glow with such an elevation, as may one and all carry upon them the semblance of sacredness.

But might not this semblance deceive him? Have you ever heard any tell, and with complacency too, how powerfully his devotion was awakened by an act of attendance on the oratorio—how his heart, melted and subdued by the influence of harmony, did homage to all the religion of which it was the

vehicle—how he was so moved and overborne, as to shed the tears of contrition, and to be agitated by the terrors of judgment, and to receive an awe upon his spirit of the greatness and the majesty of God—and that, wrought up to the lofty pitch of eternity, he could look down upon the world, and by the glance of one commanding survey, pronounce upon the littleness and the vanity of all its concerns? It is indeed very possible that all this might thrill upon the ears of the man, and circulate a succession of solemn and affecting images around his fancy—and yet that essential principle of his nature, upon which the practical influence of Christianity turns, might have met with no reaching and no subduing efficacy whatever to arouse it. He leaves the exhibition, as dead in trespasses and sins as he came to it. Conscience has not wakened upon him. Repentance has not turned him. Faith has not made any positive lodgement within him of her great and her constraining realities. He speeds him back to his business and to his family, and there he acts the old man in all the entireness of his uncrucified temper, and of his obstinate worldliness, and of all those earthly and unsanctified affections which are found to cleave to him with as great tenacity as ever. He is really and experimentally the very same man as before—and all those sensibilities which seemed to bear upon them so much of the air and unction of heaven, are found to go into dissipation, and be forgotten with the loveliness of the song.

Amid all that illusion which such momentary visitations of seriousness and of sentiment throw around the character of man, let us never lose sight of the test, that “by their fruits ye shall know them.” It is not coming up to this test, that you hear and are delighted. It is that you hear and *do*. This is the ground upon which the reality of your religion is discriminated now; and on the day of reckoning, this is the ground upon which your religion will be judged then; and that award is to be passed upon you, which will fix and perpetuate your destiny for ever. You have a taste for music. This no more implies the hold and the ascendancy of religion over you, than that you have a taste for beautiful scenery, or a taste for painting, or even a taste for the sensualities of epicurism. But music may be made to express the glow and the movement of devotional feeling; and is it saying nothing to say that the heart of him who listens with a raptured ear is, through the whole time of the performance, in harmony with such a movement? Why, it

is saying nothing to the purpose. Music may lift the inspiring note of patriotism; and the inspiration may be felt; and it may thrill over the recesses of the soul, to the mustering up of all its energies; and it may sustain to the last cadence of the song, the firm nerve and purpose of intrepidity; and all this may be realized upon him, who, in the day of battle, and upon actual collision with the dangers of it, turns out to be a coward. And music may lull the feelings into unison with piety; and stir up the inner man to lofty determinations; and so engage for a time his affections, that, as if weaned from the dust, they promise an immediate entrance on some great and elevated career, which may carry him through his pilgrimage superior to all the sordid and grovelling enticements that abound in it. But he turns him to the world, and all this glow abandons him; and the words which he had heard, he doeth them not; and in the hour of temptation he turns out to be a deserter from the law of allegiance; and the test we have now specified looks hard upon him; and discriminates him amid all the parading insignificance of his fine but fugitive emotions, to be the subject both of present guilt and of future vengeance.

The faithful application of this test would put to flight a host of other delusions. It may be carried round amongst all those phenomena of human character, where there is the exhibition of something associated with religion, but which is not religion itself. An exquisite relish for music is no test of the influence of Christianity; neither are many other of the exquisite sensibilities of our nature. When a kind mother closes the eyes of her expiring babe, she is thrown into a flood of sensibility, and soothing to her heart are the sympathy and the prayers of an attending minister. When a gathering neighbourhood assemble to the funeral of an acquaintance, one pervading sense of regret and tenderness sits on the faces of the company; and the deep silence, broken only by the solemn utterance of the man of God, carries a kind of pleasing religiousness along with it. The sacredness of the hallowed day, and all the decencies of its observation, may engage the affections of him who loves to walk in the footsteps of his father; and every recurring Sabbath may bring to his bosom the charm of its regularity and its quietness. Religion has its accompaniments; and in these there may be a something to soothe and to fascinate, even in the absence of the appropriate influences of religion. The deep and tender impression of a family bereavement, is not religion. The love of established

decencies, is not religion. The charm of all that sentimentalism which is associated with many of its solemn and affecting services, is not religion. They may form the distinct folds of its accustomed drapery; but they do not, any, or all of them put together, make up the substance of the thing itself. A mother's tenderness may flow most gracefully over the tomb of her departed little one; and she may talk the while of that heaven whither its spirit has ascended. The man whom death had widowed of his friend, may abandon himself to the movements of that grief, which for a time will claim an ascendancy over him; and, amongst the multitude of his other reveries, may love to hear of the eternity, where sorrow and separation are alike unknown. He who has been trained from his infant days to remember the Sabbath, may love the holiness of its aspect, and associate himself with all its observances, and take a delighted share in the mechanism of its forms. But let not these think, because the tastes and the sensibilities which engross them, may be blended with religion, that they indicate either its strength or its existence within them. We recur to the test. We press its imperious exactions upon you. We call for fruit, and demand the permanency of a religious influence on the habits and the history. How many who take a flattering unction to their souls, when they think of their amiable feelings, and their becoming observations, with whom this severe touchstone would, like the head of Medusa, put to flight all their complacency! The afflictive dispensation is forgotten—and he on whom it was laid, is practically as indifferent to God and to eternity as before. The Sabbath services come to a close, and they are followed by the same routine of week-day worldliness as before. In neither the one case nor the other, do we see more of the radical influence of Christianity, than in the sublime and melting influence of sacred music upon the soul; and all this tide of emotion is found to die away from the bosom, like the pathos or like the loveliness of a song.

The instances may be multiplied without number. A man may have a taste for eloquence, and eloquence, the most touching or sublime, may lift her pleading voice on the side of religion. A man may love to have his understanding stimulated by the ingenuities or the resistless urgencies of an argument; and argument the most profound and the most overbearing may put forth all the might of a constraining vehemence in behalf of religion. A man may feel the rejoicings of a conscious elevation, when



some ideal scene of magnificence is laid before him ; and where are these scenes so readily to be met with, as when led to expatiate in thought over the track of eternity, or to survey the wonders of creation, or to look to the magnitude of those great and universal interests which lie within the compass of religion? A man may have his attention riveted and regaled by that power of imitative description, which brings all the recollections of his own experience before him ; which presents him with a faithful analysis of his own heart ; which embodies in language such intimacies of observation and of feeling, as have often passed before his eyes, or played within his bosom, but had never been so truly or so ably pictured to the view of his remembrance. Now, all this may be done in the work of pressing the duties of religion ; in the work of instancing the applications of religion ; in the work of pointing those allusions to life and to manners, which manifest the truth to the conscience, and plant such a conviction of sin, as forms the very basis of a sinner's religion. Now, in all these cases, we see other principles brought into action, and which may be a state of most lively and vigorous movement, and be yet in a state of entire separation from the principle of religion. We will venture to say, on the strength of these illustrations, that as much delight may emanate from the pulpit on an arrested audience beneath it, as ever emanated from the boards of a theatre—ay, and with as total a disjunction of mind too, in the one case as in the other, from the essence or the habit of religion. We recur to the test. We make our appeal to experience ; and we put it to you all, whether your finding upon the subject do not agree with our saying about it, that a man may weep and admire, and have many of his faculties put upon the stretch of their most intense gratification—his judgment established, and his fancy enlivened, and his feelings overpowered, and his hearing charmed as by the accents of heavenly persuasion, and all within him feasted by the rich and varied luxuries of an intellectual banquet!—Oh ! it is cruel to frown unmannerly in the midst of so much satisfaction. But I must not forget that truth has her authority as well as her sternness ; and she forces me to affirm, that after all this has been felt and gone through, there might not be one principle which lies at the turning-point of conversion, that has experienced a single movement—not one of its purposes be conceived—not one of its doings be accomplished—not one step of that repentance, which if we have not we perish, so much as entered upon—not one an-

nouncement of that faith, by which we are saved, admitted into a real and actual possession by the inner man. He has had his hour's entertainment, and willingly does he award this homage to the performer, that he hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument—but, in another hour it fleets away from his remembrance, and goes all to nothing, like the loveliness of a song.

Now, in bringing these Discourses to a close, we feel it our duty to advert to this exhibition of character in man. The sublime and interesting topic which has engaged us, however feebly it may have been handled; however inadequately it may have been put in all its worth, and in all its magnitude before you; however short the representation of the speaker, or the conception of the hearers, may have been of that richness, and that greatness, and that loftiness, which belong to it; possesses in itself a charm to fix the attention, and to regale the imagination, and to subdue the whole man into a delighted reverence; and, in a word, to beget such a solemnity of thought and of emotion, as may occupy and enlarge the soul for hours together, as may waft it away from the grossness of ordinary life, and raise it to a kind of elevated calm above all its vulgarities and all its vexations.

Now, tell us whether the whole of this effect upon the feelings may not be formed without the presence of religion. Tell us whether there might not be such a constitution of mind, that it may both want altogether that principle, in virtue of which the doctrines of Christianity are admitted into the belief, and the duties of Christianity are admitted into a government over the practice—and yet at the very same time, it may have the faculty of looking abroad over some scene of magnificence, and of being wrought up to ecstasy with the sense of all those glories among which it is expatiating. We want you to see clearly the distinction between these two attributes of the human character. They are, in truth, as different the one from the other, as a taste for the grand and the graceful in scenery differs from the appetite of hunger; and the one may both exist and have a most intense operation within the bosom of that very individual, who entirely disowns and is entirely disgusted with the other. What! must a man be converted, ere, from the most elevated peak of some Alpine wilderness, he become capable of feeling the force and the majesty of those great lineaments which the hand of nature has thrown around him, in the varied forms of precipice, and mountain, and the wave of mighty forests, and the rush of

sounding waterfalls, and distant glimpses of human territory, and pinnacles of everlasting snow, and the sweep of that circling horizon, which folds in its ample embrace the whole of this noble amphitheatre? Tell us whether, without the aid of Christianity, or without a particle of reverence for the only Name given under heaven whereby men can be saved, a man may not kindle at such a perspective as this, into all the raptures, and into all the movements of a poetic elevation; and be able to render into the language of poetry, the whole of that sublime and beauteous imagery which adorns it? and, as if he were treading on the confines of a sanctuary which he has not entered, may he not mix up with the power and the enchantment of his description, such allusions to the presiding genius of the scene; or to the still but animating spirit of the solitude; or to the speaking silence of some mysterious character which reigns throughout the landscape; or, in fine, to that Eternal Spirit, who sits behind the elements He has formed, and combines them into all the varieties of a wide and a wondrous creation? might not all this be said and sung with an emphasis so moving as to spread the colouring of piety over the pages of him who performs thus well upon his instrument; and yet, the performer himself have a conscience unmoved by a single warning of God's actual communication, and the judgment unconvinced, and the fears unawakened, and the life unreformed by it?

Now, what is true of a scene on earth, is also true of that wider and more elevated scene which stretches over the immensity around it, into a dark and a distant unknown. Who does not feel an aggrandizement of thought and of faculty, when he looks abroad over the amplitudes of creation—when, placed on a telescopic eminence, his aided eye can find a pathway to innumerable worlds—when that wondrous field, over which there had hung for many ages the mantle of so deep an obscurity, is laid open to him, and, instead of a dreary and unpeopled solitude, he can see over the whole face of it such an extended garniture of rich and goodly habitations? Even the Atheist, who tells us that the universe is self-existent and indestructible—even he, who instead of seeing the traces of a manifold wisdom in its manifold varieties, sees nothing in them all but the exquisite structures and the lofty dimensions of materialism—even he, who would despoil creation of its God, cannot look upon its golden suns, and their accompanying systems, without the solemn impression of a magnificence that fixes and overpowers him.

Now, conceive such a belief of God as you all profess to dawn upon his understanding. Let him become as one of yourselves—and so be put into the condition of rising from the sublime of matter to the sublime of mind. Let him now learn to subordinate the whole of this mechanism to the design and authority of a great presiding Intelligence: and re-assembling all the members of the universe, however distant, into one family, let him mingle with his former conceptions of the grandeur which belonged to it, the conception of that Eternal Spirit who sits enthroned on the immensity of His own wonders, and embraces all that He has made, within the ample scope of one great administration. Then will the images and the impressions of sublimity come in upon him from a new quarter. Then will another avenue be opened, through which a sense of grandeur may find its way into his soul, and have a mightier influence than ever to fill, and to elevate, and to expand it. Then will be established a new and a noble association, by the aid of which all that he formerly looked upon as fair, becomes more lovely; and all that he formerly looked upon as great, becomes more magnificent. But will you believe us, that even with this accession to his mind of ideas gathered from the contemplation of the Divinity; even with that pleasurable glow which steals over his imagination, when he now thinks of the majesty of God; even with as much of what you would call piety, as we fear is enough to soothe and to satisfy many of yourselves, and which stirs and kindles within you when you hear the goings forth of the Supreme set before you in the terms of a lofty representation; even with all this, we say there may be as wide a distance from the habit and the character of godliness, as if God was still atheistically disowned by him. Take the conduct of his life and the currency of his affections; and you may see as little upon them of the stamp of loyalty to God, or of reverence for any one of His authenticated proclamations, as you may see in him who offers his poetic incense to the genii, or weeps enraptured over the visions of a beauteous mythology. The sublime of Deity has wrought up his soul to a pitch of conscious and pleasing elevation—and yet this no more argues the will of Deity to have a practical authority over him, than does that tone of elevation which is caught by looking at the sublime of a naked materialism. The one and the other have their little hour of ascendancy over him; and when he turns him to the rude and ordinary world, both vanish alike from his sensibilities, as does the loveliness of a song.

To kindle and be elevated by a sense of the majesty of God, is one thing. It is totally another thing to feel a movement of obedience to the will of God, under the impression of His rightful authority over all the creatures whom He has formed. A man may have an imagination all alive to the former, while the latter never prompts him to one act of obedience; never leads him to compare his life with the requirements of the Lawgiver; never carries him from such a scrutiny as this, to the conviction of sin; never whispers such an accusation to the ear of his conscience, as causes him to mourn, and to be in heaviness for the guilt of his hourly and habitual rebellion; never shuts him up to the conclusion of the need of a Saviour; never humbles him to acquiescence in the doctrine of that revelation which comes to his door with such a host of evidence, as even his own philosophy cannot bid away; never extorts a single believing prayer in the name of Christ, or points a single look, either of trust or of reverence, to His atonement; never stirs any effective movement of conversion; never sends an aspiring energy into his bosom after the aids of that Spirit, who alone can waken him out of his lethargies, and by the anointing which remaineth, can rivet and substantiate in his practice, those goodly emotions which have hitherto plied him with the deceitfulness of their momentary visits, and then capriciously abandoned him.

The mere majesty of God's power and greatness, when offered to your notice, lays hold of one of the faculties within you. The holiness of God, with His righteous claim of legislation, lays hold of another of these faculties. The difference between them is so great, that the one may be engrossed and interested to the full, while the other remains untouched, and in a state of entire dormancy. Now, it is no matter what it be that ministers delight to the former of these two faculties; if the latter be not arrested and put on its proper exercise, you are making no approximation whatever to the right habit and character of religion. There are a thousand ways in which we may contrive to regale your taste for that which is beautiful and majestic. It may find its gratification in the loveliness of a vale, or in the freer and bolder outlines of an upland situation, or in the terrors of a storm, or in the sublime contemplations of astronomy, or in the magnificent idea of a God who sends forth the wakefulness of His omniscient eye, and the vigour of His upholding hand, throughout all the realms of nature and of providence. The mere taste of the human mind may get its ample enjoyment in

each and in all of these objects, or in a vivid representation of them; nor does it make any material difference, whether this representation be addressed to you from the stanzas of a poem, or from the recitations of a theatre, or finally from the discourses and the demonstrations of a pulpit. And thus it is, that still on the impulse of the one principle only, people may come in gathering multitudes to the house of God; and share with eagerness in all the glow and bustle of a crowded attendance; and have their every eye directed to the speaker; and feel a responding movement in their bosom to his many appeals and his many arguments; and carry a solemn and overpowering impression of all the services away with them; and yet, throughout the whole of this seemingly exhibition, not one effectual knock may have been given at the door of conscience. The other principle may be as profoundly asleep, as if hushed into the insensibility of death. There is a spirit of deep slumber, it would appear, which the music of no description, even though attuned to a theme so lofty as the greatness and majesty of the Godhead, can ever charm away. Oh! it may have been a piece of parading insignificance altogether—the minister playing on his favourite instrument, and the people dissipating away their time on the charm and idle luxury of a theatrical emotion.

The religion of taste is one thing. The religion of conscience is another. We recur to the test: What is the plain and practical doing which ought to issue from the whole of our argument? If one lesson come more clearly or more authoritatively out of it than another, it is the supremacy of the Bible. If fitted to impress one movement rather than another; it is that movement of docility, in virtue of which, man, with the feeling that he has all to learn, places himself in the attitude of a little child, before the book of the unsearchable God, who has deigned to break His silence, and to transmit even to our age of the world, a faithful record of His own communication. What progress then are you making in this movement? Are you, or are you not, like newborn babes, desiring the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby? How are you coming on in the work of casting down your lofty imaginations? With the modesty of true science, which is here at one with the humblest and most penitentiary feeling which Christianity can awaken, are you bending an eye of earnestness on the Bible, and appropriating its informations, and moulding your every conviction to its doctrines and its testimonies? How long, we beseech you, has this been your habitual

exercise? By this time do you feel the darkness and the insufficiency of nature? Have you found your way to the need of an atonement? Have you learned the might and the efficacy which are given to the principle of faith? Have you longed with all your energies to realize it? Have you broken loose from the obvious misdoings of your former history? Are you convinced of your total deficiency from the spiritual obedience of the affections? Have you read of the Holy Ghost, by whom renewed in the whole desire and character of your mind, you are led to run with alacrity in the way of the commandments? Have you turned to its practical use, the important truth, that He is given to the believing prayers of all who really want to be relieved from the power both of secret and of visible iniquity? We demand something more than the homage you have rendered to the pleasantness of the voice that has been sounding in your hearing. What we have now to urge upon you, is the bidding of the voice, to read and to reform, and to pray, and, in a word, to make your consistent step from the elevations of philosophy, to all those exercises, whether of doing or of believing, which mark the conduct of the earnest, and the devoted, and the subdued, and the aspiring Christian.

This brings under our view a most deeply interesting exhibition of human nature, which may often be witnessed among the cultivated orders of society. When a teacher of Christianity addresses himself to that principle of justice within us, in virtue of which we feel the authority of God to be a prerogative which righteously belongs to Him, he is then speaking the appropriate language of religion, and is advancing its naked and appropriate claim over the obedience of mankind. He is then urging that pertinent and powerful consideration, upon which alone he can ever hope to obtain the ascendancy of a practical influence over the purposes and the conduct of human beings. It is only by insisting on the moral claim of God to a right of government over His creatures, that he can carry their loyal subordination to the will of God. Let him keep by this single argument, and urge it upon the conscience, and then, without any of the other accompaniments of what is called Christian oratory, he may bring convincingly home upon his hearers all the varieties of Christian doctrine. He may establish within their minds the dominion of all that is essential in the faith of the New Testament. He may, by carrying out this principle of God's authority into all its applications, convince them of sin. He may lead

them to compare the loftiness and spirituality of His law, with the habitual obstinacy of their own worldly affections. He may awaken them to the need of a Saviour. He may urge them to a faithful and submissive perusal of God's own communication. He may thence press upon them the truth and the immutability of their Sovereign. He may work in their hearts an impression of this emphatic saying, that God is not to be mocked—that His law must be upheld in all the significance of its proclamations—and that either its severities must be discharged upon the guilty, or in some other way an adequate provision be found for its outraged dignity, and its violated sanctions. Thus may he lead them to flee for refuge to the blood of the atonement. And he may further urge upon his hearers, that such is the enormity of sin, that it is not enough to have found an expiation for it; that its power and its existence must be eradicated from the hearts of all who are to spend their eternity in the mansions of the celestial; that for this purpose, an expedient is made known to us in the New Testament; that a process must be described upon earth, to which there is given the appropriate name of sanctification; that, at the very commencement of every true course of discipleship, this process is entered upon with a purpose in the mind of forsaking all; that nothing short of a single devotedness to the will of God, will ever carry us forward through the successive stages of this holy and elevated career; that to help the infirmities of our nature, the Spirit is ever in readiness to be given to those who ask it: and that thus the life of every Christian becomes a life of entire dedication to Him who died for us—a life of prayer and vigilance, and close dependence on the grace of God—and, as the infallible result of the plain but powerful and peculiar teaching of the Bible, a life of vigorous unwearied activity in the doing of all the commandments. ●

Now, this we should call the essential business of Christianity. This is the truth as it is in Jesus, in its naked and unassociated simplicity. In the work of urging it, nothing more might have been done than to present certain views, which may come with as great clearness and freshness, and take as full possession of the mind of a peasant, as of the mind of a philosopher. There is a sense of God, and of the rightful allegiance that is due to Him. There are plain and practical appeals to the conscience. There is a comparison of the state of the heart, with the requirements of a law which proposes to take the heart under its obedience. There is the inward discernment of its coldness about God; of



its unconcern about the matters of duty and of eternity; of its devotion to the forbidden objects of sense; of its constant tendency to nourish within its own receptacles, the very element and principle of rebellion, and in virtue of this, to send forth the stream of an hourly and accumulating disobedience over those doings of the outer man, which make up his visible history in the world. There is such an earnest and overpowering impression of all this, as will fix a man down to the single object of deliverance; as will make him awake only to those realities which have a significant and substantial bearing on the case that engrosses him; as will teach him to nauseate all the impertinences of tasteful and ambitious description; as will attach him to the truth in its simplicity; as will fasten his every regard upon the Bible, where, if he persevere in the work of honest inquiry, he will soon be made to perceive the accordancy between its statements, and all those movements of fear, or guilt, or deeply felt necessity, or conscious darkness, stupidity, and unconcern about the matters of salvation, which pass within his own bosom; in a word, as will endear to him that plainness of speech, by which his own experience is set evidently before him, and that plain phraseology of Scripture, which is best fitted to bring home to him the doctrine of redemption, in all the truth and in all the preciousness of its applications.

Now, the whole of this work may be going on, and that too in the wisest and most effectual manner, without so much as one particle of incense being offered to any of the subordinate principles of the human constitution. There may be no fascinations of style. There may be no magnificence of description. There may be no poignancy of acute and irresistible argument. There may be a riveted attention on the part of those whom the Spirit of God hath awakened to seriousness about the plain and affecting realities of conversion. Their conscience may be stricken, and their appetite be excited for an actual settlement of mind on those points about which they feel restless and unconfirmed. Such as these are vastly too much engrossed with the exigencies of their condition, to be repelled by the homeliness of unadorned truth. And thus it is, that while the loveliness of the song has done so little in helping on the influences of the gospel, our men of simplicity and prayer have done so much for it. With a deep and earnest impression of the truth themselves, they have made manifest that truth to the consciences of others. Missionaries have gone forth with no

other preparation than the simple word of the Testimony,—and thousands have owned its power, by being both the hearers of the word and the doers of it also. They have given us the experiment in a state of unmingled simplicity; and we learn, from the success of their noble example, that without any one human expedient to charm the ear, the heart may, by the naked instrumentality of the Word of God, urged with plainness on those who feel its deceit and its worthlessness, be charmed to an entire acquiescence in the revealed way of God, and have impressed upon it the genuine stamp and character of godliness.

Could the sense of what is due to God be effectually stirred up within the human bosom, it would lead to a practical carrying of all the lessons of Christianity. Now, to awaken this moral sense, there are certain simple relations between the creature and the Creator, which must be clearly apprehended, and manifested with power unto the conscience. We believe, that however much philosophers may talk about the comparative ease of forming those conceptions which are simple, they will, if in good earnest after a right footing with God, soon discover in their own minds, all that darkness and incapacity about spiritual things, which are so broadly announced to us in the New Testament. And oh! it is a deeply interesting spectacle, to behold a man, who can take a masterly and commanding survey over the field of some human speculation, who can clear his discriminated way through all the turns and ingenuities of some human argument, who, by the march of a mighty and resistless demonstration, can scale with assured footstep the sublimities of science, and, from his firm stand on the eminence he has won, can descry some wondrous range of natural or intellectual truth spread out in subordination before him:—and yet this very man may, in reference to the moral and authoritative claims of the Godhead, be in a state of utter apathy and blindness! All his attempts, either at the spiritual discernment, or the practical impression of this doctrine, may be arrested and baffled by the weight of some great inexplicable impotency. A man of homely talents, and still homelier education, may see what he cannot see, and feel what he cannot feel; and wise and prudent as he is, there may lie the barrier of an obstinate and impenetrable concealment, between his accomplished mind, and those things which are revealed unto babes.

But while his mind is thus utterly devoid of what may be called the main or elemental principle of theology, he may have a far quicker apprehension, and have his taste and his feelings much more powerfully interested, than the simple Christian who is beside him, by what may be called the circumstantialia of theology. He can throw a wider and more rapid glance over the magnitudes of creation. He can be more delicately alive to the beauties and the sublimities which abound in it. He can, when the idea of a presiding God is suggested to him, have a more kindling sense of His natural majesty, and be able, both in imagination and in words, to surround the throne of the Divinity by the blazonry of more great, and splendid, and elevating images. And yet, with all those powers of conception which he does possess, he may not possess that on which practical Christianity hinges. The moral relation between him and God may neither be effectively perceived, nor faithfully proceeded on. Conscience may be in a state of the most entire dormancy, and the man be regaling himself with the magnificence of God, while he neither loves God, nor believes God, nor obeys God.

And here I cannot but remark, how much effect and simplicity go together in the annals of Moravianism. The men of this truly interesting denomination address themselves exclusively to that principle of our nature on which the proper influence of Christianity turns. Or, in other words, they take up the subject of the gospel message—that message devised by Him who knew what was in man, and who, therefore, knew how to make the right and the suitable application to man. They urge the plain Word of the Testimony: and they pray for a blessing from on high; and that thick impalpable veil, by which the god of this world blinds the hearts of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should enter in—that veil, which no power of philosophy can draw aside, gives way to the demonstration of the Spirit; and thus it is, that a clear perception of scriptural truth, and all the freshness and permanency of its moral influences, are to be met with among men who have just emerged from the rudest and the grossest barbarity. When one looks at the number and the greatness of their achievements—when he thinks of the change they have made on materials so coarse and so unpromising—when he eyes the villages they have formed—and around the whole of that engaging perspective by which they have

chequered and relieved the grim solitude of the desert, he witnesses the love, and listens to the piety of reclaimed savages;— who would not long to be in possession of the charm by which they have wrought this wondrous transformation—who would not willingly exchange for it all the parade of human eloquence, and all the confidence of human argument—and for the wisdom of winning souls, who is there that would not rejoice to throw the loveliness of the song, and all the insignificance of its passing fascinations away from him?

And yet it is right that every cavil against Christianity should be met, and every argument for it be exhibited, and all the graces and sublimities of its doctrine be held out to their merited admiration. And if it be true, as it certainly is, that throughout the whole of this process a man may be carried rejoicingly along from the mere indulgence of his taste, and the mere play and exercise of his understanding; while conscience is untouched, and the supremacy of moral claims upon the heart and the conduct is practically disowned by him—it is further right that this should be adverted to; and that such a melancholy unhingement in the constitution of man should be fully laid open; and that he should be driven out of the seductive complacency which he is so apt to cherish, merely because he delights in the loveliness of the song; and that he should be urged with the imperiousness of a demand which still remains unsatisfied, to turn him from the corrupt indifference of nature, and to become personally a religious man; and that he should be assured how all the gratification he felt in listening to the word which respected the kingdom of God, will be of no avail, unless that kingdom come to himself in power—that it will only go to heighten the perversity of his character—that it will not extenuate his real and practical ungodliness, but will serve most fearfully to aggravate its condemnation.

With a religion so argumentable as ours, it may be easy to gather out of it a feast for the human understanding. With a religion so magnificent as ours, it may be easy to gather out of it a feast for the human imagination. But with a religion so humbling, and so strict, and so spiritual, it is not easy to mortify the pride, or to quell the strong enmity of nature; or to arrest the currency of the affections; or to turn the constitutional habits; or to pour a new complexion over the moral history; or to stem the domineering influence of things seen and things sensible; or to invest faith with a practical supremacy; or to give

its objects such a vivacity of influence as shall overpower the near and the hourly impressions, that are ever emanating upon man from a seducing world. It is here that man feels himself treading upon the limit of his helplessness. It is here that he sees where the strength of nature ends; and the power of grace must either be put forth, or leave him to grope his darkling way without one inch of progress towards the life and the substance of Christianity. It is here that a barrier rises on the contemplation of the inquirer—the barrier of separation between the carnal and the spiritual, and on which he may idly waste the every energy which belongs to him in the enterprise of surmounting it. It is here, that after having walked the round of nature's acquisitions, and lavished upon the truth all his ingenuities, and surveyed it in its every palpable character of grace and majesty, he will still feel himself on a level with the simplest and most untutored of the species. He needs the power of a living manifestation. He needs the anointing which remaineth. He needs that which fixes and perpetuates a stable revolution upon the character, and in virtue of which he may be advanced from the state of one who hears and is delighted, to the state of one who hears and is a doer. How strikingly is the experience even of vigorous and accomplished nature at one on this point with the announcements of revelation, that to work this change, there must be the putting forth of a peculiar agency; and that it is an agency, which, withheld from the exercise of loftiest talent, is often brought down on an impressed audience, through the humblest of all instrumentality, with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power.

Think it not enough, that you carry in your bosom an expanding sense of the magnificence of creation. But pray for a subduing sense of the authority of the Creator. Think it not enough, that with the justness of a philosophical discernment, you have traced that boundary which hems in all the possibilities of human attainment, and have found that all beyond it is a dark and fathomless unknown. But let this modesty of science be carried, as in consistency it ought, to the question of revelation, and let all the antipathies of nature be schooled to acquiescence in the authentic testimonies of the Bible. Think it not enough, that you have looked with sensibility and wonder at the representation of God throned in immensity, yet combining, with the vastness of His entire superintendence, a most thorough inspection into all the minute and countless diversities of existence.

Think of your own heart as one of these diversities; and that He ponders all its tendencies; and has an eye upon all its movements; and marks all its waywardness; and, God of judgment as He is, records its every secret and its every sin in the book of His remembrance. Think it not enough, that you have been led to associate a grandeur with the salvation of the New Testament, when made to understand that it draws upon it the regards of an arrested universe. How is it arresting your own mind? What has been the earnestness of your personal regards towards it? And tell us, if all its faith, and all its repentance, and all its holiness, are not disowned by you? Think it not enough, that you have felt a sentimental charm when angels were pictured to your fancy as beckoning you to their mansions, and anxiously looking to the every symptom of your grace and reformation. Oh! be constrained by the power of all this tenderness, and yield yourselves up in a practical obedience to the call of the Lord God, merciful and gracious. Think it not enough, that you have shared for a moment in the deep and busy interest of that arduous conflict which is now going on for a moral ascendancy over the species. Remember that the conflict is for each of you individually; and let this alarm you into a watchfulness against the power of every temptation, and a cleaving dependence upon Him through whom alone you will be more than conquerors. Above all, forget not, that while you only hear and are delighted, you are still under nature's powerlessness and nature's condemnation—and that the foundation is not laid, the mighty and essential change is not accomplished, the transition from death unto life is not undergone, the saving faith is not formed, nor the passage taken from darkness to the marvellous light of the gospel, till you are both hearers of the word and doers also. "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."

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#### SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITIES.

Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended,

and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.—Matt. vii. 24-27.

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.—Matt. xi. 25.

Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.—Luke xiii. 26, 27.

For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.—Rom. ii. 13.

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God: for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.—1 Cor. ii. 1, 2, 4, 5, 12-14.

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.—1 Cor. iii. 19.

For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.—1 Cor. iv. 20.

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giving life.—2 Cor. iii. 3, 5, 6.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.—Eph. i. 17-19.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.—For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.—Eph. ii. 1, 10.

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.—1 Thess. i. 5.

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.—James i. 18, 22-25.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.—1 Pet. ii. 9.

But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you; and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.—1 John ii. 20, 27.





DISCOURSES

ON THE

APPLICATION OF CHRISTIANITY

TO THE COMMERCIAL AND ORDINARY

AFFAIRS OF LIFE.



## PREFACE.

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THESE Discourses can be regarded in no other light, than as the fragment of a subject far too extensive to be overtaken within a compass so narrow. There has only a partial survey been taken of the morality of the actions that are current among people engaged in merchandise; and with regard to the morality of the affections which stir in their hearts, and give a feverish and diseased activity to the pursuits of worldly ambition, this has scarcely been touched upon, save in a very general way in the Discourse on the Love of Money.

And yet, in the estimation of every cultivated Christian, this second branch of the subject should be by far the most interesting—as it relates to that spiritual discipline by which the love of the world is overcome; and by which all that oppressive anxiety is kept in check, which the reverses and uncertainties of business are so apt to inject into the bosom; and by which the appetite that urges him who hasteth to be rich is effectually restrained—so as to make it possible for a man to give his hand to the duties of his secular occupation, and, at the same time, to maintain that sacredness of heart which becomes every fleeting traveller through a scene, all whose pleasures and whose prospects are so soon to pass away.

There are two questions of casuistry connected with this part of the subject, which would demand no small degree of consideration. The first relates to the degree in which an affection for present things, and present interests, ought to be indulged. And the second is, whether, on the supposition that a desire after the good things of the present life were reduced down to the standard of the gospel, there would remain a sufficient impulse in the world for upholding its commerce, at the rate which would secure the greatest amount of comfort and subsistence to its families.

Without offering any demonstration, at present, upon this matter, we simply state it as our opinion, that, though the whole business of the world were in the hands of men thoroughly Christianized, and who, rating wealth according to its real dimensions on the high scale of eternity, were chastened out of all their idolatrous regards to it—yet would trade, in these circumstances, be carried to the extreme limit of its being really productive or desirable. An affection for riches, beyond what Christianity prescribes, is not essential to any extension of commerce that is at all valuable or legitimate; and, in opposition to the maxim, that the spirit of enterprise is the soul of commercial prosperity, do we hold, that it is the excess of this spirit beyond the moderation of the New Testament, which, pressing on the natural boundaries of trade, is sure, at length, to visit every country where it operates with the recoil of all those calamities which, in the shape of beggared capitalists, and unemployed operatives, and dreary intervals of bankruptcy and alarm, are observed to follow a season of overdone speculation.

We have added seven Discourses to those which originally appeared. In the selection of these we have been guided by the consideration, that the duty of citizens, and the duty of Christian philanthropists, and more especially the duty of those who belong to the humbler classes of society, are at all times topics of pressing and peculiar interest, in those places where commerce has assembled together its masses of large and contiguous population. The Christianity which is all things to all men, can adapt its lessons to all the possible varieties of human life.

## DISCOURSE I.

ON THE MERCANTILE VIRTUES WHICH MAY EXIST WITHOUT THE INFLUENCE  
OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."—PHIL. iv. 8.

THE Apostle, in these verses, makes use of certain terms, without ever once proposing to advance any definition of their meaning. He presumes on a common understanding of this, between himself and the people whom he is addressing. He presumes that they know what is signified by Truth, and Justice, and Loveliness, and the other moral qualities which are included in the enumeration of our text. They, in fact, had words to express them, for many ages antecedent to the coming of Christianity into the world. Now, the very existence of the words proves, that, before the gospel was taught, the realities which they express must have existed also. These good and respectable attributes of character must have been occasionally exemplified by men, prior to the religion of the New Testament. The virtuous and the praiseworthy must, ere the commencement of the new dispensation, have been met with in society—for the Apostle does not take them up in this passage, as if they were unknown and unheard-of novelties—but such objects of general recognition, as could be understood on the bare mention of them, without warning and without explanation.

But more than this. These virtues must not only have been exemplified by men previous to the entrance of the gospel amongst them—seeing that the terms expressive of the virtues were perfectly understood—but men must have known how to love and to admire them. How is it that we apply the epithet 'lovely' to any moral qualification, but only in as far as that qualification does in fact draw towards it a sentiment of love? How is it that another qualification is said to be of good report,

but in as far as it has received from men an applauding or an honourable testimony? The Apostle does not bid his readers have respect to such things as are lovely, and then, for the purpose of saving them from error, enumerate what the things are which he conceives to possess this qualification. He commits the matter, with perfect confidence, to their own sense and their own apprehension. He bids them bear a respect to whatsoever things are lovely—nor does he seem at all suspicious, that, by so doing, he leaves them in any darkness or uncertainty about the precise import of the advice which he is delivering. He therefore recognises the competency of men to estimate the lovely and the honourable of character. He appeals to a tribunal in their own breasts, and evidently supposes, that, antecedently to the light of the Christian revelation, there lay scattered among the species certain principles of feeling and of action, in virtue of which, they both occasionally exhibited what was just, and true, and of good report, and also could render to such an exhibition the homage of their regard and of their reverence. At present we shall postpone the direct enforcement of these virtues upon the observation of Christians, and shall confine our thoughts of them to the object of estimating their precise importance and character, when they are realized by those who are not Christians.

While we assert with zeal every doctrine of Christianity, let us not forget that there is a zeal without discrimination; and that, to bring such a spirit to the defence of our faith, or of any one of its peculiarities, is not to vindicate the cause, but to discredit it. Now, there is a way of maintaining the utter depravity of our nature, and of doing it in such a style of sweeping and of vehement asseveration, as to render it not merely obnoxious to the taste, but obnoxious to the understanding. On this subject there is often a roundness and a temerity of announcement, which any intelligent man, looking at the phenomena of human character with his own eyes, cannot go along with; and thus it is, that there are injudicious defenders of orthodoxy, who have mustered against it not merely a positive dislike, but a positive strength of observation and argument. Let the nature of man be a ruin, as it certainly is, it is obvious to the most common discernment, that it does not offer one unvaried and unalleviated mass of deformity. There are certain phases, and certain exhibitions of this nature which are more lovely than others—certain traits of character, not due to

the operation of Christianity at all, and yet calling forth our admiration and our tenderness—certain varieties of moral complexion, far more fair and more engaging than certain other varieties; and to prove that the gospel may have had no share in the formation of them, they in fact stood out to the notice and respect of the world before the gospel was ever heard of. The classic page of antiquity sparkles with repeated exemplifications of what is bright and beautiful in the character of man; nor do all its descriptions of external nature waken up such an enthusiasm of pleasure, as when it bears testimony to some graceful or elevated doing out of the history of the species. And whether it be the kindness of maternal affection, or the unweariedness of filial piety, or the constancy of tried and unalterable friendship, or the earnestness of devoted patriotism, or the rigour of unbending fidelity, or any other of the recorded virtues, which shed a glory over the remembrance of Greece and of Rome—we fully concede it to the admiring scholar, that they one and all of them were sometimes exemplified in those days of heathenism; and that, out of the materials of a period, crowded as it was with moral abominations, there may also be gathered things which are pure, and lovely, and true, and just, and honest, and of good report.

What do we mean, then, it may be asked, by the universal depravity of man? How shall we reconcile the admission now made, with the unqualified and authoritative language of the Bible, when it tells us of the totality and the magnitude of human corruption? Wherein lies that desperate wickedness, which is everywhere ascribed to all the men of all the families that be on the face of the earth? And how can such a tribute of acknowledgment be awarded to the sages and the patriots of antiquity, who yet, as the partakers of our fallen nature, must be outcasts from the favour of God, and have the character of evil stamped upon the imaginations of the thoughts of their hearts continually.

In reply to these questions, let us speak to your own experimental recollections on a subject in which you are aided both by the consciousness of what passes within you, and by your observation of the character of others. Might not a sense of honour elevate that heart which is totally unfurnished with a sense of God? Might not an impulse of compassionate feeling be sent into that bosom which is never once visited by a movement of duteous loyalty towards the Lawgiver in heaven?

Might not occasions of intercourse with the beings around us, develop whatever there is in our nature of generosity, and friendship, and integrity, and patriotism; and yet the unseen Being, who placed us in this theatre, be neither loved, nor obeyed, nor listened to? Amid the manifold varieties of human character, and the number of constitutional principles which enter into its composition, might there not be an individual in whom the constitutional virtues so blaze forth and have the ascendancy, as to give a general effect of gracefulness to the whole of this moral exhibition; and yet, may not that individual be as unmindful of his God, as if the principles of his constitution had been mixed up in such a different proportion, as to make him an odious and a revolting spectacle? In a word, might not Sensibility shed forth its tears, and Friendship perform its services, and Liberality impart of its treasure, and Patriotism earn the gratitude of its country, and Honour maintain itself entire and untainted, and all the softenings of what is amiable, and all the glories of what is chivalrous and manly, gather into one bright effulgency of moral accomplishment on the person of him who never, for a single day of his life, subordinates one habit, or one affection, to the will of the Almighty; who is just as careless and as unconcerned about God, as if the native tendencies of his constitution had compounded him into a monster of deformity; and who just as effectually realizes this attribute of rebellion against his Maker, as the most loathsome and profligate of the species, that he walks in the counsel of his own heart, and after the sight of his own eyes?

The same constitutional variety may be seen on the lower fields of creation. You there witness the gentleness of one animal, the affectionate fidelity of another, the cruel and unrelenting ferocity of a third; and you never question the propriety of the language, when some of these instinctive tendencies are better reported of than others; or when it is said of the former of them, that they are the more fine, and amiable, and endearing. But it does not once occur to you, that, even in the very best of these exhibitions, there is any sense of God, or that the great master-principle of His authority is at all concerned in it. Transfer this contemplation back again to our species; and under the same complexional difference of the more and the less lovely, or the more and the less hateful, you will perceive the same utter insensibility to the consideration of a God, or the



same utter inefficiency on the part of His law to subdue human habits and human inclinations. It is true, that there is one distinction between the two cases; but it all goes to aggravate the guilt and the ingratitude of man. He has an understanding which the inferior animals have not—and yet, with this understanding, does he refuse practically to acknowledge God. He has a conscience, which they have not—and yet, though it whisper in the ear of his inner man the claims of an unseen Legislator, does he lull away his time in the slumbers of indifference, and live without Him in the world.

Or go to the people of another planet, over whom the hold of allegiance to their Maker is unbroken—in whose hearts the Supreme sits enthroned, and throughout the whole of whose history there runs the perpetual and the unfailing habit of subordination to His law. It is conceivable, that with them too, there may be varieties of temper and of natural inclination, and yet all of them be under the effective control of one great and imperious principle; that, in subjection to the will of God, every kind and every honourable disposition is cherished to the uttermost; and that in subjection to the same will, every tendency to anger, and malignity, and revenge, is repressed at the first moment of its threatened operation; and that, in this way, there will be the fostering of a constant encouragement given to the one set of instincts, and the struggling of a constant opposition made against the other. Now, only conceive this great bond of allegiance to be dissolved; the mighty and subordinating principle, which wont to wield an ascendancy over every movement and every affection, to be loosened and done away; and then would this loyal, obedient world become what ours is—*independent of Christianity*. Every constitutional desire would run out, in the unchecked spontaneity of its own movements. The law of heaven would furnish no counteraction to the impulses and the tendencies of nature. And tell us, in these circumstances, when the restraint of religion was thus lifted off, and all the passions let out to take their own tumultuous and independent career—tell us, if, though amid the uproar of the licentious and vindictive propensities, there did gleam forth at times some of the finer and the lovelier sympathies of nature—tell us, if this would at all affect the state of that world as a state of enmity against God; where His will was reduced to an element of utter insignificance; where the voice of their rightful Master fell powerless on the consciences of a listless and alienated

family; where humour, and interest, and propensity—at one time selfish, and at another social—took their alternate sway over those hearts from which there was excluded all effectual sense of an overruling God? If He be unheeded and disowned by the creatures whom He has formed, can it be said to alleviate the deformity of their rebellion, that they, at times, experience the impulse of some amiable feeling which He hath implanted, or at times hold out some beauteousness of aspect which He hath shed over them? Shall the value or the multitude of the gifts release them from their loyalty to the Giver; and when nature puts herself into the attitude of indifference or hostility against Him, how is it that the graces and the accomplishments of nature can be pleaded in mitigation of her antipathy to Him, who invested nature with all her graces, and upholds her in the display of all her accomplishments?

The way, then, to assert the depravity of man, is to fasten on the radical element of depravity, and to show how deeply it lies incorporated with his moral constitution. It is not by an utterance of rash and sweeping totality to refuse him the possession of what is kind in sympathy, or of what is dignified in principle—for this were in the face of all observation. It is to charge him direct with his utter disloyalty to God. It is to convict him of treason against the Majesty of heaven. It is to press home upon him the impiety of not caring about God. It is to tell him, that the hourly and habitual language of his heart is, I will not have the Being who made me to rule over me. It is to go to the man of honour, and, while we frankly award it to him that his pulse beats high in the pride of integrity—it is to tell him, that He who keeps it in living play, and who sustains the loftiness of its movements, and who, in one moment of time, could arrest it for ever, is not in all his thoughts. It is to go to the man of soft and gentle emotions, and, while we gaze in tenderness upon him, it is to read to him, out of his own character, how the exquisite mechanism of feeling may be in full operation, while He who framed it is forgotten; while He who poured into his constitution the milk of human kindness, may never be adverted to with one single sentiment of veneration, or one single purpose of obedience; while He who gave him his gentler nature, who clothed him in all its adornments, and in virtue of whose appointment it is, that, instead of an odious and a revolting monster, he is the much-loved child of sensibility, may be uttered disowned by him. In

a word, it is to go round among all that Humanity has to offer in the shape of fair, and amiable, and engaging, and to prove how deeply Humanity has revolted against that Being who has done so much to beautify and exalt her. It is to prove that the carnal mind, under all its varied complexions of harshness or of delicacy, is enmity against God. It is to prove that, let nature be as rich as she may in moral accomplishments, and let the most favoured of her sons realize upon his own person the finest and the fullest assemblage of them—should he, at the moment of leaving this theatre of display, and bursting loose from the framework of mortality, stand in the presence of his Judge, and have the question put to him, What hast thou done unto me? this man of constitutional virtue, with all the salutations he got upon earth, and all the reverence that he has left behind him, may, naked and defenceless before Him who sitteth on the throne, be left without a plea and without an argument.

God's controversy with our species is not, that the glow of honour or of humanity is never felt among them. It is, that none of them understandeth, and none of them seeketh after God. It is, that He is deposed from His rightful ascendancy. It is, that He, who in fact inserted in the human bosom every one principle that can embellish the individual possessor, or maintain the order of society, is banished altogether from the circle of his habitual contemplations. It is, that man taketh his way in life as much at random, as if there was no presiding Divinity at all; and that, whether he at one time grovel in the depths of sensuality, or at another kindle with some generous movement of sympathy or of patriotism, he is at both times alike unmindful of Him to whom he owes his continuance and his birth. It is, that he moves his every footstep at his own will; and has utterly discarded, from its supremacy over him, the will of that invisible Master who compasses all his goings, and never ceases to pursue him by the claims of a resistless and legitimate authority. It is this which is the essential or the constituting principle of rebellion against God. This it is which has exiled the planet we live in beyond the limits of His favoured creation—and whether it be shrouded in the turpitude of licentiousness or cruelty, or occasionally brightened with the gleam of the kindly and the honourable virtues, it is thus that it is seen as afar off, by Him who sitteth on the throne, and looketh on our strayed world, as athwart a wide and a dreary gulf of separation.

And when prompted by love towards His alienated children; He devised a way of recalling them—when willing to pass over all the ingratitude He had gotten from their hands, He reared a pathway of return, and proclaimed a pardon and a welcome to all who should walk upon it—when through the offered Mediator, who magnified His broken law, and upheld, by His mysterious sacrifice, the dignity of that government which the children of Adam had disowned, He invited all to come to Him and be saved—should this message be brought to the door of the most honourable man upon earth, and he turn in contempt and hostility away from it, has not that man posted himself more firmly than ever on the ground of rebellion? Though an unsullied integrity should rest upon all his transactions, and the homage of confidence and respect be awarded to him from every quarter of society, has not this man, by slighting the overtures of reconciliation, just plunged himself the deeper in the guilt of wilful and determined ungodliness? Has not the creature exalted itself above the Creator; and in the pride of those accomplishments, which never would have invested his person had not they come to him from above, has he not, in the act of resisting the gospel, aggravated the provocation of his whole previous defiance to the Author of it?

Thus much for all that is amiable, and for all that is manly, in the accomplishments of nature, when disjoined from the faith of Christianity. They take up a separate residence in the human character from the principle of godliness. Anterior to this religion, they go not to alleviate the guilt of our departure from the living God; and subsequently to this religion, they may blazon the character of him who stands out against it: but on the principles of a most clear and intelligent equity, they never can shield him from the condemnation and the curse of those who have neglected the great salvation.

The doctrine of the New Testament will bear to be confronted with all that can be met or noticed on the face of human society. And we speak most confidently, to the experience of many, when we say, that often, in the course of their manifold transactions, have they met the man, whom the bribery of no advantage whatever could seduce into the slightest deviation from the path of integrity—the man, who felt his nature within him put into a state of the most painful indignancy, at everything that bore upon it the character of a sneaking or dishonourable artifice—the man, who positively could not be at rest under the

consciousness that he had ever betrayed, even to his own heart, the remotest symptom of such an inclination—and whom, therefore, the unaided law of justice and of truth has placed on a high and deserved eminence in the walks of honourable merchandise.

Let us not withhold from this character the tribute of its most rightful admiration; but let us further ask, if, with all that he thus possessed of native feeling and constitutional integrity, there was never observed in any such individual an utter emptiness of religion; and that God is not in all his thoughts; and that, when he does what happens to be at one with the will of the Lawgiver, it is not because he is impelled to it by a sense of its being the will of the Lawgiver, but because he is impelled to it by the working of his own instinctive sensibilities; and that, however fortunate or however estimable these sensibilities are, they still consist with the habit of a mind that is in a state of total indifference about God? Have we never read in our own character, or in the observed character of others, that the claims of the Divinity may be entirely forgotten by the very man to whom society around him yield, and rightly yield, the homage of an unsullied and honourable reputation; that this man may have all his foundations in the world; that every security on which he rests, and every enjoyment upon which his heart is set, lieth on this side of death; that a sense of the coming day on which God is to enter into judgment with him, is, to every purpose of practical ascendancy, as good as expunged altogether from his bosom; that he is far in desire, and far in enjoyment, and far in habitual contemplation, away from that God who is not far from any one of us; that his extending credit, and his brightening prosperity, and his magnificent retreat from business, with all the splendour of its accommodations—that these are the futurities at which he terminates; and that he goes not in thought beyond them to that eternity, which, in the flight of a few little years, will absorb all, and annihilate all? In a word, have we never observed the man, who, with all that was right in mercantile principle, and all that was open and unimpeachable in the habit of his mercantile transactions, lived in a state of utter estrangement from the concerns of immortality? who, in reference to God, persisted, from one year to another, in the spirit of a deep slumber? who, in reference to the man that tries to awaken him out of his lethargy, recoils, with the most sensitive dislike, from the faithfulness of his ministrations?

who, in reference to the Book which tells him of his nakedness and his guilt, never consults it with one practical aim, and never tries to penetrate beyond that aspect of mysteriousness which it holds out to an undiscerning world? who attends not church, or attends it with all the lifelessness of a form? who reads not his Bible, or reads it in the discharge of a self-prescribed and unfruitful task? who prays not, or prays with the mockery of an unmeaning observation? and, in one word, who, while surrounded by all those testimonies which give to man a place of moral distinction among his fellows, is living in utter carelessness about God, and about all the avenues which lead to Him?

Now, attend for a moment to what that is which the man has, and to what that is which he has not. He has an attribute of character which is in itself pure, and lovely, and honourable, and of good report. He has a natural principle of integrity; and under its impulse he may be carried forward to such fine exhibitions of himself, as are worthy of all admiration. It is very noble, when the simple utterance of his word carries as much security along with it, as if he had accompanied that utterance by the signatures, and the securities, and the legal obligations, which are required of other men. It might tempt one to be proud of his species when he looks at the faith that is put in him by a distant correspondent, who, without one other hold of him than his honour, consigns to him the wealth of a whole flotilla, and sleeps in the confidence that it is safe. It is indeed an animating thought, amid the gloom of this world's depravity, when we behold the credit which one man puts in another, though separated by oceans and by continents; when he fixes the anchor of a sure and steady dependence on the reported honesty of one whom he never saw; when, with all his fears for the treachery of the varied elements, through which his property has to pass, he knows, that should it only arrive at the door of its destined agent, all his fears and all his suspicions may be at an end. We know nothing finer than such an act of homage from one human being to another, when perhaps the diameter of the globe is between them; nor do we think that either the renown of her victories, or the wisdom of her counsels, so signalizes the country in which we live, as does the honourable dealing of her merchants; that all the glories of British policy, and British valour, are far eclipsed by the moral splendour which British faith has thrown over the name and the

character of our nation ; nor has she gathered so proud a distinction from all the tributaries of her power, as she has done from the awarded confidence of those men of all tribes, and colours, and languages, who look to our agency for the most faithful of all management, and to our keeping for the most inviolable of all custody.

There is no denying, then, the very extended prevalence of a principle of integrity in the commercial world ; and he who has such a principle within him, has that to which all the epithets of our text may rightly be appropriated. But it is just as impossible to deny, that, with this thing which he has, there may be another thing which he has not. He may not have one duteous feeling of reverence which points upward to God. He may not have one wish, or one anticipation, which points forward to eternity. He may not have any sense of dependence on the Being who sustains him ; and who gave him his very principle of honour, as part of that interior furniture which He has put into his bosom ; and who surrounded him with the theatre on which he has come forward with the finest and most illustrious displays of it ; and who set the whole machinery of his sentiment and action agoing ; and can, by a single word of His power, bid it cease from the variety, and cease from the gracefulness of its movements. In other words, he is a man of integrity, and yet he is a man of ungodliness. He is a man born for the confidence and the admiration of his fellows, and yet a man whom his Maker can charge with utter defection from all the principles of a spiritual obedience. He is a man whose virtues have blazoned his own character in time, and have upheld the interests of society, and yet a man who has not, by one movement of principle, brought himself nearer to the kingdom of heaven, than the most profligate of the species. The condemnation, that he is an alien from God, rests upon him in all the weight of its unmitigated severity. The threat, that they who forget God shall be turned into hell, will, on the great day of its fell and sweeping operation, involve him among the wretched outcasts of eternity. That God from whom, while in the world, he withheld every due offering of gratitude, and remembrance, and universal subordination of habit and of desire, will show him to his face, how, under the delusive garb of such sympathies as drew upon him the love of his acquaintances, and of such integrities as drew upon him their respect and their confidence, he was in fact a determined rebel against the autho-

riety of Heaven; that not one commandment of the law, in the true extent of its interpretation, was ever fulfilled by him; that the pervading principle of obedience to this law, which is love to God, never had its ascendancy over him; that the beseeching voice of the Lawgiver, so offended and so insulted—but who, nevertheless, devised in love a way of reconciliation for the guilty, never had the effect of recalling him; that, in fact, he neither had a wish for the friendship of God, nor cherished the hope of enjoying Him—and that, therefore, as he lived without hope, so he lived without God in the world; finding all his desire, and all his sufficiency, to be somewhere else than in that favour which is better than life; and so, in addition to the curse of having continued not in all the words of the book of God's law to do them, entailing upon himself the mighty aggravation of having neglected all the offers of His gospel.

We say, then, of this natural virtue, what our Saviour said of the virtue of the Pharisees, many of whom were not extortioners, as other men—that verily it hath its reward. When disjoined from a sense of God, it is of no religious estimation whatever; nor will it lead to any religious blessing, either in time or in eternity. It has, however, its enjoyments annexed to it, just as a fine taste has its enjoyments annexed to it; and in these is it abundantly rewarded. It is exempted from that painfulness of inward feeling which nature has annexed to every act of departure from honesty. It is sustained by a conscious sense of rectitude and elevation. It is gratified by the homage of society; the members of which are ever ready to award the tribute of acknowledgment to those virtues that support the interests of society. And, finally, it may be said, that prosperity, with some occasional variations, is the general accompaniment of that credit, which every man of undeviating justice is sure to draw around him. But what reward, will you tell us, is due to him on the great day of the manifestation of God's righteousness, when, in fact, he has done nothing unto God? What recompence can be awarded to him out of those books which are then to be opened, and in which he stands recorded as a man overcharged with the guilt of spiritual idolatry? How shall God grant unto him the reward of a servant, when the service of God was not the principle of his doings in the world; and when neither the justice he rendered to others, nor the sensibility that he felt for them, bore the slightest character of an offering to his Maker?

But wherever the religious principle has taken possession of



the mind, it animates these virtues with a new spirit; and when so animated, all such things as are pure, and lovely, and just, and true, and honest, and of good report, have a religious importance and character belonging to them. The text forms part of an epistle addressed to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which were at Philippi; and the lesson of the text is matter of direct and authoritative enforcement, on all who are saints in Christ Jesus, at the present day. Christianity, with the weight of its positive sanctions on the side of what is amiable and honourable in human virtue, causes such an influence to rest on the character of its genuine disciples, that, on the ground both of inflexible justice and ever-breathing charity, they are ever sure to leave the vast majority of the world behind them. Simplicity and godly sincerity form essential ingredients of that peculiarity by which they stand signalized in the midst of an ungodly generation. The true friends of the gospel, tremblingly alive to the honour of their Master's cause, blush for the disgrace that has been brought on it by men who keep its Sabbaths, and yield an ostentatious homage to its doctrines and its sacraments. They utterly disclaim all fellowship with that vile association of cant and of duplicity, which has sometimes been exemplified, to the triumph of the enemies of religion; and they both feel the solemn truth, and act on the authority of the saying, that neither thieves, nor liars, nor extortioners, nor unrighteous persons, have any part in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

## DISCOURSE II.

THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN AIDING AND AUGMENTING  
THE MERCANTILE VIRTUES.

“For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.”—  
Rom. xiv. 18.

WE have already asserted the natural existence of such principles in the heart of man, as lead him to many graceful and to many honourable exhibitions of character. We have further asserted, that this formed no deduction whatever from that article of orthodoxy, which affirms the utter depravity of our nature; that the essence of this depravity lies in man having broken loose from the authority of God, and delivered himself wholly up to the guidance of his own inclinations; that though some of these inclinations are in themselves amiable features of human character, and point in their effects to what is most useful to human society, yet devoid as they all are of any reference to the will and to the rightful sovereignty of the Supreme Being, they could not avert, or even so much as alleviate, that charge of ungodliness, which may be fully carried round amongst all the sons and daughters of the species; that they furnish not the materials of any valid or satisfactory answer to the question, “What hast thou done unto God?” and that whether they are the desires of a native rectitude, or the desires of an instinctive benevolence, they go not to purge away the guilt of having no love, and no care, for the Being who formed and who sustains us.

But what is more. If the virtues and accomplishments of nature are at all to be admitted into the controversy between God and man, instead of forming any abatement upon the enormity of our guilt, they stamp upon it the reproach of a still deeper and more determined ingratitude. Let us conceive it possible, for a moment, that the beautiful personifications of Scripture were all realized; that the trees of the forest clapped their hands unto God, and that the isles were glad at His pre-

sence ; that the little hills shouted on every side, and the valleys covered over with corn sent forth their notes of rejoicing ; that the sun and the moon praised Him, and the stars of light joined in the solemn adoration ; that the voice of glory to God was heard from every mountain and from every waterfall, and that all nature, animated throughout by the consciousness of a pervading and a presiding Deity, burst into one loud and universal song of gratulation. Would not a strain of greater loftiness be heard to ascend from those regions where the all-working God had left the traces of His own immensity, than from the tamer and the humbler scenery of an ordinary landscape ? Should not we look for a gladder acclamation from the fertile field, than from the arid waste, where no character of grandeur made up for the barrenness that was around us ? Would not the goodly tree, compassed about with the glories of its summer foliage, lift up an anthem of louder gratitude than the lowly shrub that grew beneath it ? Would not the flower, from whose leaves every hue of loveliness was reflected, send forth a sweeter rapture than the russet weed, which never drew the eye of any admiring passenger ? And, in a word, wherever we saw the towering eminences of nature, or the garniture of her more rich and beauteous adornments, would it not be there that we looked for the deepest tones of devotion, or there for the tenderest and most exquisite of its melodies ?

There is both the sublime of character and the beauteous of character exemplified upon man. We have the one in that high sense of honour, which no interest and no terror can seduce from any of its obligations. We have the other in that kindness of feeling, which one look or one sigh of imploring distress can touch into liveliest sympathy. Only grant, that we have nothing either in the constitution of our spirits, or in the structure of our bodies, which we did not receive ; and that mind, with all its varieties, is as much the product of a creating hand, as matter in all its modifications ; and then, on the face of human society, do we witness all the gradations of a moral scenery, which may be directly referred to the operation of Him who worketh all in all. It is our belief, that, as to any effectual sense of God, there is as deep a slumber throughout the whole of this world's living and rational generations, as there is throughout all the diversities of its mute and unconscious materialism ; and that to make our alienated spirits again alive unto the Father of them, calls for as distinct and as miraculous an exertion of the Divinity, as

would need to be put forth in the act of turning stones into the children of Abraham. Conceive this to be done, then—and that a quickening and a realizing sense of the Deity pervaded all the men of our species—and that each knew how to refer his own endowments, with an adequate expression of gratitude to the unseen author of them—from whom, we ask, of all these various individuals, should we look for the hallelujahs of devoutest ecstasy? Would it not be from him whom God had arrayed in the splendour of nature's brightest accomplishments? Would it not be from him, with whose constitutional feelings the movements of honour and benevolence were in fullest harmony? Would it not be from him whom his Maker had cast into the happiest mould, and attempered into sweetest unison with all that was kind, and generous, and lovely, and ennobled by the loftiest emotions, and raised above his fellows into the finest spectacle of all that was graceful, and all that was manly? Surely, if the possession of these moralities be just another theme of acknowledgment to the Lord of the spirits of all flesh, then, if the acknowledgment be withheld, and these moralities have taken up their residence in the bosom of him who is utterly devoid of piety, they go to aggravate the reproach of his ingratitude; and to prove, that, of all the men upon earth who are far from God, he stands at the widest distance, he remains proof against the weightiest claims, and he, of the dead in trespasses and sins, is the most profoundly asleep to the call of religion, and to the supremacy of its righteous obligations.

It is by argument such as this, that we would attempt to convince of sin those who have a righteousness that is without godliness; and to prove, that, with the possession of such things as are pure, and lovely, and honest, and of good report, they in fact can only be admitted to reconciliation with God, on the same footing with the most worthless and profligate of the species; and to demonstrate, that they are in the very same state of need and of nakedness, and are therefore children of wrath, even as others; that it is only through faith in the preaching of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ that they can be saved; and that, unless brought down from the delusive eminency of their own conscious attainments, they take their forgiveness through the blood of the Redeemer, and their sanctification through the Spirit which is at His giving, they shall obtain no part in that inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not away.

But the gospel of Jesus Christ does something more than hold out a refuge to the guilty. It takes all those who accept of its overtures under its supreme and exclusive direction. It keeps by them in the way of counsel, and exhortation, and constant superintendence. The grace which it reveals, is a grace which not merely saves all men, but which teaches all men. He who is the proposed Saviour, also claims to be the alone Master of those who put their trust in Him. His cognisance extends itself over the whole line of their history; and there is not an affection of their heart, or a deed of their visible conduct, over which He does not assert the right of an authority that is above all control, and that refuses all rivalship.

Now, we want to point attention to a distinction which obtains between one set and another set of His requirements. By the former, we are enjoined to practise certain virtues, which, separately from His injunction altogether, are in great demand, and in great reverence, amongst the members of society—such as compassion, and generosity, and justice, and truth; which, independently of the religious sanction they obtain from the law of the Saviour, are in themselves so lovely, and so honourable, and of such good report, that they are ever sure to carry general applause along with them, and thus to combine both the characteristics of our text—that he who in these things serveth Christ, is both acceptable to God, and approved of men.

But there is another set of requirements, where the will of God, instead of being seconded by the applause of men, is utterly at variance with it. There are some who can admire the generous sacrifices that are made to truth or to friendship, but who, without one opposing scruple, abandon themselves to all the excesses of riot and festivity, and are therefore the last to admire the puritanic sobriety of him whom they cannot tempt to put his chastity or his temperance away from him; though the same God, who bids us lie not one to another, also bids us keep the body under subjection, and to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. Again, there are some in whose eyes an unvitiated delicacy looks a beauteous and an interesting spectacle, and an undeviating self-control looks a manly and respectable accomplishment; but who have no taste in themselves, and no admiration in others, for the more direct exercises of religion; and who positively hate the strict and unbending preciseness of those who join in every ordinance, and on every

returning night celebrate the praises of God in their family; and that, though the heavenly Lawgiver, who tells us to live righteously and soberly, tells us also to live godly in the present evil world. And lastly, there are some who have not merely a toleration, but a liking for all the decencies of an established observation; but who, with the homage they pay to sabbaths and to sacraments, nauseate the Christian principle in the supreme and regenerating vitality of its influences; who, under a general religiousness of aspect, are still in fact the children of the world—and therefore hate the children of light in all that is peculiar and essentially characteristic of that high designation; who understand not what is meant by having our conversation in heaven: and, utter strangers to the separated walk, and the spiritual exercises, and the humble devotedness, and the consecrated affections, of the new creature in Jesus Christ, shrink from them altogether as from the extravagancies of a fanaticism in which they have no share, and with which they can have no sympathy—and all this, though the same scripture which prescribes the exercises of household and of public religion, lays claim to an undivided authority over all the desires and affections of the soul; and will admit of no compromise between God and the world; and insists upon an utter deadness to the one, and a most vehement sensibility to the other; and elevates the standard of loyalty to the Father of our spirits, to the lofty pitch of loving Him with all our strength, and of doing all things to His glory.

Let these examples serve to impress a real and experimental distinction which obtains between two sets of virtues; between those which possess the single ingredient of being approved by God, while they want the ingredient of being also acceptable unto men—and those which possess both these ingredients, and to the observance of which, therefore, we may be carried by a regard to the will of God, without any reference to the opinion of men—or by a regard to the opinion of men, without any reference to the will of God. Among the first class of virtues we would assign a foremost place to all those inward and spiritual graces which enter into the obedience of the affections—highly approved of God, but not at all acceptable to the general taste, or carrying along with them the general congeniality of the world. And then, though they do not possess the ingredient of God's approbation in a way so separate and unmixed, we would say, that abstinence from profane language,

and attendance upon church, and a strict keeping of the Sabbath, and the exercises of family worship, and the more rigid degrees of sobriety, and a fearful avoidance of every encroachment on temperance or chastity, rank more appropriately with the first than with the second class of virtues; for though there be many in society who have no religion, and yet to whom several of these virtues are acceptable, yet we must allow, that they do not convey such a universal popularity along with them, as certain other virtues which belong indisputably to the second class. These are the virtues which have a more obvious and immediate bearing on the interest of society—such as the truth which is punctual to all its engagements, and the honour which never disappoints the confidence it has inspired, and the compassion which cannot look unmoved at any of the symptoms of human wretchedness, and the generosity which scatters unsparingly around it. These are virtues which God has enjoined, and in behalf of which man lifts the testimony of a loud and ready admiration—virtues in which there is a meeting and a combining of both the properties of our text; so that he who in these things serveth Christ, is both approved of God and acceptable unto men.

Let a steady hold be kept of this distinction, and it will be found capable of being turned to a very useful application, both to the object of illustrating principle, and to the important object of detecting character. For this purpose, let us carry the distinction along with us, and make it subservient to the establishment of two or three successive observations.

First. A man may possess, to a considerable extent, the second class of virtues, and not possess so much as one iota of the religious principle; and that, among other reasons, because a man may feel a value for one of the attributes which belongs to this class of virtues, and have no value whatever for the other attribute. If justice be both approved by God, and acceptable to men, he may, on the latter property alone, be induced to the strictest maintenance of this virtue—and that without suffering its former property to have any practical influence whatever on any of his habits, or any of his determinations: and the same with every other virtue belonging to this second class. As residing in his character, there may not be the ingredient of godliness in any one of them. He may be well reported on account of them by men; but with God he may lie under as fearful a severity of reckoning, as if he wanted

them altogether. Surely, it does not go to alleviate the withdrawal of your homage from God, that you have such an homage to the opinion of men, as influences you to do things, to the doing of which the law of God is not able to influence you. It cannot be said to palliate the revolting of your inclinations from the Creator, that you have transferred them all to the creature; and given an ascendancy to the voice of human reputation, which you have refused to the voice and authority of your Lawgiver in heaven. Your want of subordination to Him is surely not made up by the respectful subordination that you render to the taste or the judgment of society. And in addition to this, we would have you to remember, that though other constitutional principles, besides a regard to the opinion of others, helped to form the virtues of the second class upon your character; though compassion, and generosity, and truth, would have broken out into full and flourishing display upon you, and that just because you had a native sensibility or a native love of rectitude; yet, if the first ingredient be wanting, if a regard to the approbation of God have no share in the production of the moral accomplishment—then all the morality you can pretend to, is of as little religious estimation, and is as utterly disconnected with the rewards of religion, as all the elegance of taste you can pretend to, or all the raptured love of music you can pretend to, or all the vigour and dexterity of bodily exercises you can pretend to. All these, in reference to the great question of immortality, profit but little; and it is godliness alone that is profitable unto all things. It is upon this consideration that we would have you to open your eyes to the nakedness of your condition in the sight of God; to look to the full weight of the charge that He may prefer against you; to estimate the fearful extent of the deficiency under which you labour; to resist the delusive whispering of peace, when there is no peace; and to understand, that the wrath of God abideth on every child of nature, however rich he may be in the virtues and accomplishments of nature.

But again. This view of the distinction between the two sets of virtues, will serve to explain how it is, that, in the act of turning unto God, the one class of them appears to gather more copiously, and more conspicuously, upon the front of a renewed character, than the other class; how it is, that the former wear a more unequivocal aspect of religiousness than the latter; how it is, that an air of gravity, and decency, and



seriousness, looks to be more in alliance with sanctity, than the air either of open integrity, or of smiling benevolence; how it is, that the most ostensible change in the habit of a converted profligate, is that change in virtue of which he withdraws himself from the companions of his licentiousness; and that to renounce the dissipations of his former life, stands far more frequently, or at least far more visibly, associated with the act of putting on Christianity, than to renounce the dishonesties of his former life. It is true, that by the law of the gospel, he is laid as strictly under the authority of the commandment to live righteously, as of the commandment to live soberly. But there is a compound character in those virtues which are merely social; and the presence of the one ingredient serves to throw into the shade, or to disguise altogether, the presence of the other ingredient. There is a greater number of irreligious men, who are at the same time just in their dealings, than there is of irreligious men, who are at the same time pure and temperate in their habits; and therefore it is, that justice, even the most scrupulous, is not so specific, and, of course, not so satisfying a mark of religion, as is a sobriety that is rigid and inviolable. And all this helps to explain how it is, that when a man comes under the power of religion, to abandon the levities of his past conduct is an event which stands far more noticeably out upon him, at this stage of his history, than to abandon the iniquities of his past conduct; that the most characteristic transformation which takes place at such a time, is a transformation from thoughtlessness, and from licentious gaiety, and from the festive indulgences of those with whom he went to run to all those excesses of riot, of which the Apostle says, that "they which do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God:" for even then, and in the very midst of all his impiety, he may have been kind-hearted, and there might be no room upon his person for a visible transformation from inhumanity of character; even then, he may have been honourable, and there might be as little room for a visible transformation from fraudulency of character.

Thirdly. Nothing is more obvious than the antipathy that is felt by a certain class of religionists against the preaching of good works; and the antipathy is assuredly well and warrantably grounded, when it is such a preaching as goes to reduce the importance, or to infringe upon the simplicity, of the great doctrine of justification by faith. But along with this, may there not be remarked the toleration with which they will listen to a

discourse upon one set of good works, and the evident coldness and dislike with which they listen to a discourse on another set of them; how a pointed remonstrance against sabbath-breaking sounds in their ears, as if more in character from the pulpit, than a pointed remonstrance against the commission of theft, or the speaking of evil; how a eulogium on the observance of family worship feels, in their taste, to be more impregnated with the spirit of sacredness, than a eulogium on the virtues of the shop or of the market-place, and that, while the one is approved of as having about it the solemn and the suitable characteristics of godliness, the other is stigmatized as a piece of barren, heartless, heathenish, and philosophic morality? Now, this antipathy to the preaching of the latter species of good works has something peculiar in it. It is not enough to say, that it arises from a sensitive alarm about the stability of the doctrine of justification; for let it be observed, that this doctrine stands opposed to the merit not of one particular class of performances, but to the merit of all performances whatsoever. It is just as unscriptural a detraction from the great truth of salvation by faith, to rest our acceptance with God on the duties of prayer, or of rigid Sabbath-keeping, or of strict and untainted sobriety, as to rest it on the punctual fulfilment of all our bargains, and on the extent of our manifold liberalities. It is not, then, a mere zeal about the great article of justification which lies at the bottom of that peculiar aversion that is felt towards a sermon on some social or humane accomplishment; and that is not felt towards a sermon on sober-mindedness, or a sermon on the observation of the sacrament, or a sermon on any of those performances which bear a more direct and exclusive reference to God. We shall find the explanation of this phenomenon, which often presents itself in the religious world, in that distinction of which we have just required that it should be kept in steady hold, and followed into its various applications. The aversion in question is often, in fact, a well-founded aversion to a topic which, though religious in the matter of it, may, from the way in which it is proposed, be altogether secular in the principle of it. It is resistance to what is deemed, and justly deemed, an act of usurpation on the part of certain virtues, which, when unanimated by a sentiment of godliness, are entitled to no place whatever in the ministrations of the gospel of Christ. It proceeds from a most enlightened fear, lest that should be held to make up the whole of religion, which is in fact utterly devoid of the spirit of religion; and from a true

and tender apprehension, lest, on the possession of certain accomplishments, which secure a fleeting credit throughout the little hour of this world's history, deluded man should look forward to his eternity with hope, and upward to his God with complacency—while he carries not on his forehead one vestige of the character of heaven, one lineament of the aspect of godliness.

And lastly. The first class of virtues bear the character of religiousness more *strongly*, just because they bear that character more *singly*. The people who are without, might, no doubt, see in every real Christian the virtues of the second class also; but these virtues do not belong to them peculiarly and exclusively. For though it be true, that every religious man must be honest, the converse does not follow, that every honest man must be religious. And it is because the social accomplishments do not form the specific, that neither do they form the most prominent and distinguishing marks of Christianity. They may also be recognised as features in the character of men who utterly repudiate the whole style and doctrine of the New Testament; and hence a very prevalent impression in society, that the faith of the gospel does not bear so powerfully and so directly on the relative virtues of human conduct. A few instances of hypocrisy amongst the more serious professors of our faith, serve to rivet the impression, and to give it perpetuity in the world. One single example, indeed, of sanctimonious duplicity, will suffice, in the judgment of many, to cover the whole of vital and orthodox Christianity with disgrace. The report of it will be borne in triumph amongst the companies of the irreligious. The man who pays no homage to sabbaths or to sacraments, will be contrasted in the open, liberal, and manly style of all his transactions, with the low cunning of this drivelling methodistical pretender; and the loud laugh of a multitude of scorners will give a force and a swell to this public outcry against the whole character of the sainthood.

Now, this delusion on the part of the unbelieving world is very natural, and ought not to excite our astonishment. We are not surprised, from the reasons already adverted to, that the truth, and the justice, and the humanity, and the moral loveliness, which do in fact belong to every new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord, should miss their observation; or, at least, fail to be recognised among the other more obvious characteristics into which believers have been translated by the faith of the gospel. But, on this very subject, there is a tendency to delusion on the part of the dis-

ciples of the faith. They need to be reminded of the solemn and indispensable religiousness of the second class of virtues. They need to be told, that though these virtues do possess the one ingredient of being approved by men, and may, on this single account, be found to reside in the characters of those who live without God—yet, that they also possess the other ingredient, of being acceptable unto God; and, on this latter account, should be made the subject of their most strenuous cultivation. They must not lose sight of the one ingredient in the other; or stigmatize, as so many fruitless and insignificant moralities, those virtues which enter as component parts into the service of Christ; so that he who in these things serveth Christ, is both acceptable to God, and approved by men. They must not expend all their warmth on the high and peculiar doctrines of the New Testament, while they offer a cold and reluctant admission to the practical duties of the New Testament. The Apostle has bound the one to the other by a tie of immediate connexion: “Wherefore, lie not one to another, as ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which is formed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.” Here the very obvious and popular accomplishment of truth is grafted on the very peculiar doctrine of regeneration: and we altogether mistake the kind of transforming influence which the faith of the gospel brings along with it, if we think that uprightness of character does not emerge at the same time with godliness of character; or that the virtues of society do not form upon the believer into as rich and varied an assemblage, as do the virtues of the sanctuary, or that, while he puts on those graces which are singly acceptable to God, he falls behind in any of those graces which are both acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Let, therefore, every pretender to Christianity vindicate this assertion by his own personal history in the world. Let him not lay his godliness aside, when he is done with the morning devotion of his family; but carry it abroad with him, and make it his companion and his guide through the whole business of the day; always bearing in his heart the sentiment, that Thou God seest me! and remembering, that there is not one hour that can flow, or one occasion that can cast up, where His law is not present with some imperious exaction or other. It is false, that the principle of Christian sanctification possesses no influence over the familiarities of civil and ordinary life. It is altogether

false, that godliness is a virtue of such a lofty and monastic order, as to hold its dominion only over the solemnities of worship, or over the solitudes of prayer and spiritual contemplation. If it be substantially a grace within us at all, it will give a direction and a colour to the whole of our path in society. There is not one conceivable transaction, amongst all the manifold varieties of human employment, which it is not fitted to animate by its spirit. There is nothing that meets us too homely to be beyond the reach of obtaining, from its influence, the stamp of something celestial. It offers to take the whole man under its ascendancy, and to subordinate all his movements: nor does it hold the place which rightfully belongs to it, till it be vested with a presiding authority over the entire system of human affairs. And therefore it is, that the preacher is not bringing down Christianity—he is only sending it abroad over the field of its legitimate operation, when he goes with it to your counting-houses, and there rebukes every selfish inclination that would carry you ever so little within the limits of fraudulency; when he enters into your chambers of agency, and there detects the character of falsehood, which lurks under all the plausibility of your multiplied and excessive charges; when he repairs to the crowded market-place, and pronounces of every bargain, over which truth, in all the strictness of quakerism, has not presided, that it is tainted with moral evil; when he looks into your shops, and, in listening to the contest of argument between him who magnifies his article, and him who pretends to undervalue it, he calls it the contest of avarice, broken loose from the restraints of integrity. He is not, by all this, vulgarizing religion, or giving it the hue and the character of earthliness. He is only asserting the might and the universality of its sole pre-eminence over man. And therefore it is, that, if possible to solemnize his hearers to the practice of simplicity and godly sincerity in their dealings, he would try to make the odiousness of sin stand visibly out on every shade and modification of dishonesty; and to assure them, that if there be a place in our world, where the subtle evasion, and the dexterous imposition, and the sly but gainful concealment, and the report which misleads an inquirer, and the gloss which tempts the unwary purchaser—are not only currently practised in the walks of merchandise, but, when not carried forward to the glare and the literality of falsehood, are beheld with general connivance; if there be a place where the sense of morality has thus

fallen, and all the nicer delicacies of conscience are overborne in the keen and ambitious rivalry of men hastening to be rich, and wholly given over to the idolatrous service of the God of this world—then that is the place, the smoke of whose iniquity rises before Him who sitteth on the throne, in a tide of deepest and most revolting abomination.

And here we have to complain of the public injustice that is done to Christianity, when one of its ostentatious professors has acted the hypocrite, and stands in disgraceful exposure before the eyes of the world. We advert to the readiness with which this is turned into a matter of general impeachment, against every appearance of seriousness; and how loud the exclamation is against the religion of all who signalize themselves; and that, if the aspect of godliness be so very decided as to become an aspect of peculiarity, then is this peculiarity converted into a ground of distrust and suspicion against the bearer of it. Now, it so happens, that, in the midst of this world lying in wickedness, a man, to be a Christian at all, must signalize himself. Neither is he in a way of salvation, unless he be one of a very peculiar people; nor would we precipitately consign him to discredit, even though the peculiarity be so very glaring as to provoke the charge of methodism. But, instead of making one man's hypocrisy act as a drawback upon the reputation of a thousand, we submit, if it would not be a fairer and more philosophical procedure, just to betake one's-self to the method of induction—to make a walking survey over the town, and record an inventory of all the men in it who are so very far gone as to have the voice of psalms in their family; or as to attend the meetings of fellowship for prayer; or as scrupulously to abstain from all that is questionable in the amusements of the world; or as, by any other marked and visible symptom whatever, to stand out to general observation as the members of a saintly and separated society. We know, that even of such there are a few, who, if Paul were alive, would move him to weep for the reproach they bring upon his Master. But we also know, that the blind and impetuous world exaggerates the few into the many; inverts the process of atonement altogether, by laying the sins of one man upon the multitude; looks at their general aspect of sanctity, and is so engrossed with this single expression of character, as to be insensible to the noble uprightness and the tender humanity with which this sanctity is associated. And therefore it is that we offer the assertion, and challenge all to its

most thorough and searching investigation, that the Christianity of these people, which many think does nothing but cant, and profess, and run after ordinances, has augmented their honesties and their liberalities, and that tenfold beyond the average character of society; that these are the men we oftenest meet with in the mansions of poverty—and who look with the most wakeful eye over all the sufferings and necessities of our species—and who open their hand most widely in behalf of the exploring and the friendless—and to whom, in spite of all their mockery, the men of the world are sure, in the negotiations of business, to award the readiest confidence—and who sustain the most splendid part in all those great movements of philanthropy which bear on the general interests of mankind—and who, with their eye full upon eternity, scatter the most abundant blessings over the fleeting pilgrimage of time—and who, while they hold their conversation in heaven, do most enrich the earth we tread upon, with all those virtues which secure enjoyment to families, and uphold the order and prosperity of the commonwealth.

## DISCOURSE III.

THE POWER OF SELFISHNESS IN PROMOTING THE HONESTIES  
OF MERCANTILE INTERCOURSE.

“And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.”—LUKE vi. 33.

It is to be remarked of many of those duties, the performance of which confers the least distinction upon an individual, that they are at the same time the very duties, the violation of which would confer upon him the largest measure of obloquy and disgrace. Truth and justice do not serve to elevate a man so highly above the average morality of his species, as would generosity, or ardent friendship, or devoted and disinterested patriotism. The former are greatly more common than the latter; and, on that account, the presence of them is not so calculated to signalize the individual to whom they belong. But that is one account, also, why the absence of them would make him a more monstrous exception to the general run of character in society. And, accordingly, while it is true that there are more men of integrity in the world than there are men of very wide and liberal beneficence—it is also true, that one act of falsehood, or one act of dishonesty, would stamp a far more burning infamy on the name of a transgressor, than any defect in those more heroic charities and extraordinary virtues of which humanity is capable.

So it is far more disgraceful not to be just to another, than not to be kind to him; and, at the same time, an act of kindness may be held in higher positive estimation than an act of justice. The one is my right—nor is there any call for the homage of a particular testimony when it is rendered. The other is additional to my right—the offering of a spontaneous good-will, which I had no title to exact; and which, therefore, when rendered to me, excites in my bosom the cordiality of a warmer acknowledgment. And yet our Saviour, who knew what was in man, saw that much of the apparent kindness of nature was resolvable into



the real selfishness of nature ; that much of the good done unto others, was done in the hope that these others would do something again. And, we believe, it would be found by an able analyst of the human character, that this was the secret but substantial principle of many of the civilities and hospitalities of ordinary intercourse—that if there were no expectation either of a return in kind, or of a return in gratitude, or of a return in popularity, many of the sweetening and cementing virtues of a neighbourhood would be practically done away—all serving to prove, that a multitude of virtues, which, in effect, promoted the comfort and the interest of others, were tainted in principle by a latent regard to one's own interest ; and that thus being the fellowship of those who did good, either as a return for the good done unto them, or who did good in hope of such a return, it might be, in fact, what our Saviour characterizes it in the text—the fellowship of sinners.

But if to do that which is unjust, is still more disgraceful than not to do that which is kind, it would prove all the more strikingly how deeply sin had tainted the moral constitution of our species—could it be shown, that the great practical restraint on the prevalence of this more disgraceful thing in society, is the tie of that common selfishness which actuates and characterizes all its members. It were a curious but important question, were it capable of being resolved—if men did not feel it their interest to be honest, how much of the actual doings of honesty would still be kept up in the world ? It is our own opinion of the nature of man, that it has its honourable feelings, and its instinctive principles of rectitude, and its constitutional love of truth and of integrity ; and that, on the basis of these, a certain portion of uprightness would remain amongst us, without the aid of any prudence, or any calculation whatever. All this we have fully conceded ; and have already attempted to demonstrate, that, in spite of it, the character of man is thoroughly pervaded by the very essence of sinfulness ; because, with all the native virtues which adorn it, there adheres to it that foulest of all spiritual deformities—unconcern about God, and even antipathy to God. It has been argued against the orthodox doctrine of the universality of human corruption, that even without the sphere of the operation of the gospel, there do occur so many engaging specimens of worth and benevolence in society. The reply is, that this may be no deduction from the doctrine whatever, but be even an aggravation of it—should the very men

who exemplify so much of what is amiable, carry in their hearts an indifference to the will of that Being who thus hath formed, and thus hath embellished them. But it would be a heavy deduction indeed, not from the doctrine, but from its hostile and imposing argument, could it be shown, that the vast majority of all equitable dealing amongst men, is performed, not on the principle of honour at all, but on the principle of selfishness—that this is the soil upon which the honesty of the world mainly flourishes, and is sustained; that, were the connexion dissolved between justice to others and our own particular advantage, this would go very far to banish the observation of justice from the earth; that, generally speaking, men are honest, not because they are lovers of God, and not even because they are lovers of virtue, but because they are lovers of their own selves—inasmuch, that if it were possible to disjoin the good of self altogether from the habit of doing what was fair, as well as from the habit of doing what was kind to the people around us, this would not merely isolate the children of men from each other, in respect of the obligations of beneficence, but it would arm them into an undisguised hostility against each other, in respect of their rights. The mere disinterested principle would set up a feeble barrier indeed, against a desolating tide of selfishness, now set loose from the consideration of its own advantage. The genuine depravity of the human heart would burst forth and show itself in its true characters; and the world in which we live be transformed into a scene of unblushing fraud, of open and lawless depredation.

And, perhaps, after all, the best way of arriving practically at the solution of this question would be, not by a formal induction of particular cases, but by committing the matter to the gross and general experience of those who are most conversant in the affairs of business. There is a sort of undefinable impression that all have upon this subject, on the justness of which, however, we are disposed to lay a very considerable stress—an impression gathered out of the mass of the recollections of a whole life—an impression founded on what we may have observed in the history of our own doings—a kind of tact that we have acquired as the fruit of our repeated intercourse with men, and of the manifold transactions that we have had with them, and of the number of times in which we have been personally implicated with the play of human passions, and human interests. It is our own conviction, that a well-exercised merchant could cast a more intelligent glance at this question, than a well-exercised metaphysician;

and therefore do we submit its decision to those of them who have hazarded most largely, and most frequently, on the faith of agents, and customers, and distant correspondents. We know the fact of a very secure and well-warranted confidence in the honesty of others, being widely prevalent amongst men; and that, were it not for this, all the interchanges of trade would be suspended; and that confidence is the very soul and life of commercial activity; and it is delightful to think, how thus a man can suffer all the wealth which belongs to him to depart from under his eye, and to traverse the mightiest oceans and continents of our world, and to pass into the custody of men whom he never saw. And it is a sublime homage, one should think, to the honourable and high-minded principles of our nature, that, under their guardianship, the adverse hemispheres of the globe should be bound together in safe and profitable merchandise; and that thus one should sleep with a bosom undisturbed by jealousy, in Britain, who has all, and more than all his property treasured in the warehouses of India—and that, just because there he knows there is vigilance to defend it, and activity to dispose of it, and truth to account for it, and all those trusty virtues which ennoble the character of man to shield it from injury, and send it back again in an increasing tide of opulence to his door.

There is no question, then, as to the fact of a very extended practical honesty, between man and man, in their intercourse with each other. The only question is, as to the reason of the fact. Why is it, that he whom we have trusted acquits himself of his trust with such correctness and fidelity? Whether is his mind, in so doing, most set upon our interest or upon his own? Whether is it because he seeks our advantage in it, or because he finds in it his own advantage? Tell us to which of the two concerns he is most tremblingly alive—to our property, or to his own character? and whether, upon the last of these feelings, he may not be more forcibly impelled to equitable dealing than upon the first of them? We well know, that there is room enough in his bosom for both; but to determine how powerfully selfishness is blended with the punctualities and the integrities of business, let us ask those who can speak most soundly and experimentally on the subject, what would be the result, if the element of selfishness were so detached from the operations of trade, that there was no such thing as a man suffering in his prosperity, because he suffered in his good name; that there was no such thing as a desertion of custom and employment coming upon the back of a

blasted credit, and a tainted reputation; in a word, if the only security we had of man was his principles, and that his interest flourished and augmented just as surely without his principles as with them? Tell us, if the hold we have of a man's own personal advantage were thus broken down, in how far the virtues of the mercantile world would survive it? Would not the world of trade sustain as violent a derangement on this mighty hold being cut asunder, as the world of nature would on the suspending of the law of gravitation? Would not the whole system, in fact, fall to pieces, and be dissolved? Would not men, when thus released from the magical chain of their own interest, which bound them together into a fair and seeming compact of principle, like dogs of rapine, let loose upon their prey, overleap the barrier which formerly restrained them? Does not this prove that selfishness, after all, is the grand principle on which the brotherhood of the human race is made to hang together; and that He who can make the wrath of man to praise Him, has also, upon the selfishness of man, caused a most beautiful order of wide and useful intercourse to be suspended?

But let us here stop to observe, that, while there is much in this contemplation to magnify the wisdom of the Supreme Contriver, there is also much in it to humble man, and to convict him of the deceitfulness of that moral complacency with which he looks to his own character, and his own attainments. There is much in it to demonstrate, that his righteousness is as filthy rags; and that the idolatry of self, however hidden in its operation, may be detected in almost every one of them. God may combine the separate interests of every individual of the human race, and the strenuous prosecution of these interests by each of them, into a harmonious system of operation, for the good of one great and extended family. But if, on estimating the character of each individual member of that family, we shall find, that the mainspring of his actions is the urgency of a selfish inclination; and that to this his very virtues are subordinate; and that even the honesties which mark his conduct are chiefly, though perhaps insensibly, due to the selfishness which actuates and occupies his whole heart;—then, let the semblance be what it may, still the reality of the case accords with the most mortifying representations of the New Testament. The moralities of nature are but the moralities of a day, and will cease to be applauded when this world, the only theatre of their applause, is burnt up. They are but the blossoms of that rank efflores-

cence which is nourished on the soil of human corruption, and can never bring forth fruit unto immortality. The Discerner of all secrets sees that they emanate from a principle which is at utter war with the charity that prepares for the enjoyments, and that glows in the bosoms of the celestial; and, therefore, though highly esteemed among men, they may be in His sight an abomination.

Let us, if possible, make this still clearer to the apprehension, by descending more minutely into particulars. There is not one member of the great mercantile family, with whom there does not obtain a reciprocal interest between himself and all those who compose the circle of his various correspondents. He does them good; but his eye is all the while open to the expectation of their doing him something again. They minister to him all the profits of his employment; but not unless he minister to them of his service, and attention, and fidelity. Insomuch, that if his credit abandon him, his prosperity will also abandon him. If he forfeit the confidence of others, he will also forfeit their custom along with it. So that, in perfect consistency with interest being the reigning idol of his soul, he may still be, in every way, as sensitive of encroachment upon his reputation, as he would be of encroachment upon his property; and be as vigilant, to the full, in guarding his name against the breath of calumny or suspicion, as in guarding his estate against the inroads of a depredator. Now, this tie of reciprocity, which binds him into fellowship and good faith with society at large, will sometimes, in the mere course of business, and its unlooked-for fluctuations, draw one or two individuals into a still more special intimacy with himself. There may be a lucrative partnership, in which it is the pressing necessity of each individual, that all of them, for a time at least, stick closely and steadily together. Or there may be a thriving interchange of commodities struck out, where it is the mutual interest of all who are concerned, that each take his assigned part and adhere to it. Or there may be a promising arrangement devised, which it needs concert and understanding to effectuate; and, for which purpose, several may enter into a skilful and well-ordered combination. We are neither saying that this is very general in the mercantile world, or that it is in the slightest degree unfair. But all must be sensible, that, amid the reelings and movements of the great trading society, the phenomenon sometimes offers itself of a groupe of individuals who have entered into some compact of mutual accommodation, and who, therefore, look as if they were isolated

from the rest by the bond of some more strict and separate alliance. All we aim at, is to gather illustration to our principle, out of the way in which the members of this associated cluster conduct themselves to each other; how such a cordiality may pass between them, as, one could suppose, to be the cordiality of genuine friendship; how such an intercourse might be maintained among their families, as might look like the intercourse of unmingled affection; how such an exuberance of mutual hospitality might be poured forth, as to recall those poetic days when avarice was unknown, and men lived in harmony together on the fruits of one common inheritance; and how nobly disdainful each member of the combination appeared to be of such little savings, as could be easily surrendered to the general good and adjustment of the whole concern. And all this, it will be observed, so long as the concern prospered, and it was for the interest of each to abide by it; and the respective accounts-current gladdened the heart of every individual, by the exhibition of an abundant share of the common benefit to himself. But then, every such system of operations comes to an end. And what we ask is, if it be at all an unlikely evolution of our nature, that the selfishness which lay in wrapt concealment during the progress of these transactions, should now come forward and put out to view its cloven foot, when they draw to their termination? And as the tie of reciprocity gets looser, is it not a very possible thing, that the murmurs of something like unfair or unhandsome conduct should get louder? And that a fellowship, hitherto carried forward in smiles, should break up in reproaches? And that the whole character of this fellowship should show itself more unequivocally as it comes nearer to its close? And that some of its members, as they are becoming disengaged from the bond of mutual interest, should also become disengaged from the bond of those mutual delicacies and proprieties, and even honesties, which had heretofore marked the whole of their intercourse?—Insomuch, that a matter in which all the parties looked so fair, and magnanimous, and liberal, might at length degenerate into a contest of keen appropriation, a scramble of downright and undisguised selfishness?

But though this may happen sometimes, we are far from saying that it will happen generally. It could not, in fact, without such an exposure of character, as might not merely bring a man down in the estimation of those from whom he is now withdrawing himself, but also in the estimation of that general

public with whom he is still linked; and on whose opinion of him there still rests the dependence of a strong personal interest. To estimate precisely the whole influence of this consideration, or the degree in which honesty of character is resolvable into selfishness of character, it would be necessary to suppose, that the tie of reciprocity was dissolved, not merely between the individual and those with whom he had been more particularly and more intimately associated—but that the tie of reciprocity was dissolved between the individual and the whole of his former acquaintanceship in business. Now, the situation which comes nearest to this, is that of a man on the eve of bankruptcy, and with no sure hope of so retrieving his circumstances as again to emerge into credit, and be restored to some employment of gain or of confidence. If he have either honourable or religious feelings, then character, as connected with principle, may still, in his eyes, be something; but character, as connected with prudence, or the calculations of interest, may now be nothing. In the dark hour of the desperation of his soul, he may feel, in fact, that he has nothing to lose: and let us now see how he will conduct himself, when thus released from that check of reputation which formerly held him. In these circumstances, if you have ever seen the man abandon himself to utter regardlessness of all the honesties which at one time adorned him; and doing such disgraceful things as he would have spurned at the very suggestion of, in the days of his prosperity; and, forgetful of his former name, practising all possible shifts of duplicity to prolong the credit of a tottering establishment; and to keep himself afloat for a few months of torture and restlessness, weaving such a web of entanglement around his many friends and companions, as shall most surely implicate some of them in his fall; and, as the crisis approaches, plying his petty wiles how to survive the coming ruin, and to gather up of its fragments to his family. O how much there is here to deplore; and who can be so ungenerous as to stalk in unrelenting triumph over the helplessness of so sad an overthrow! But if ever such an exhibition meet your eye, while we ask you not to withhold your pity from the unfortunate, we ask you also to read in it a lesson of worthless and sunken humanity; how even its very virtues are tinctured with corruption; and that the honour, and the truth, and the equity, with which man proudly thinks his nature to be embellished, are often reared on the basis of selfishness, and lie prostrate in the dust when that basis is cut away.

But other instances may be quoted, which go still more satisfactorily to prove the very extended influence of selfishness on the moral judgments of our species; and how readily the estimate which a man forms on the question of right and wrong accommodates itself to his own interest. There is a strong general reciprocity of advantage between the government of a country and all its inhabitants. The one party, in this relation, renders a revenue for the expenses of the state. The other party renders back again protection from injustice and violence. Were the means furnished by the former withheld, the benefit conferred by the latter would cease to be administered. So that, with the government, and the public at large, nothing can be more strict, and more indispensable, than the tie of reciprocity that is between them. But this is not felt, and therefore not acted upon, by the separate individuals who compose that public. The reciprocity does not come home with a sufficiently pointed and personal application to each of them. Every man may calculate, that though he, on the strength of some dexterous evasions, were to keep back of the tribute that is due by him, the mischief that would recoil upon himself is divided with the rest of his countrymen; and the portion of it which comes to his door would be so very small, as to be altogether insensible. To all feeling he will just be as effectually sheltered, by the power and the justice of his country, whether he pay his taxes in full, or, under the guise of some skilful concealment, pay them but partially; and therefore, to every practical effect, the tie of reciprocity between him and his sovereign is in a great measure dissolved. Now, what is the actual adjustment of the moral sense, and moral conduct, of the population, to this state of matters? It is quite palpable. Subterfuges which, in private business, would be held to be disgraceful, are not held to be so disgraceful in this department of a man's personal transactions. The cry of indignation, which would be lifted up against the falsehood or dishonesty of a man's dealings in his own neighbourhood, is mitigated or unheard, though, in his dealings with the state, there should be the very same relaxation of principle. On this subject, there is a connivance of popular feeling, which, if extended to the whole of human traffic, would banish all its securities from the world—giving reason to believe, that much of the good done among men, is done on the expectation of a good that will be rendered back again; and that many of the virtues, by which the fellowship of human



beings is regulated and sustained, still leave the imputation unredeemed, of its being a fellowship of sinners; and that both the practice of morality, and the demand for it, are measured by the operation of a self-love, which, so far from signaling any man, or preparing him for eternity, he holds in common with the fiercest and most degenerate of his species; and that, apart from the consideration of his own interest, simplicity and godly sincerity are, to a great degree, unknown; insomuch, that though God has interposed with a law, of giving unto all their dues, and tribute to whom tribute is due, we may venture an affirmation of the vast majority of this tribute, that it is rendered for wrath's sake, and not for conscience' sake. Of so little effect is unsupported and solitary conscience to stem the tide of selfishness. And it is chiefly when honesty and truth go overbearingly along with this tide, that the voice of man is lifted up to acknowledge them, and his heart becomes feelingly alive to a sense of their obligations.

And let us here just ask, in what relation of criminality does he who uses a contraband article stand to him who deals in it? In precisely the same relation that a receiver of stolen goods stands to a thief or a depredator. There may be some who revolt at the idea of being so classified. But, if the habit we have just denounced can be fastened on men of rank and seemly reputation, let us just humble ourselves into the admission of how little the righteous practice of the world has the foundation of righteous principle to sustain it; how feeble are the securities of rectitude, had it nothing to uphold it but its own native charms, and native obligations; how society is held together, only because the grace of God can turn to account the worthless propensities of the individuals who compose it; and how, if the virtues of fidelity, and truth, and justice, had not the prop of selfishness to rest upon, they would, with the exception of a few scattered remnants, take their departure from the world, and leave it a prey to the anarchy of human passions—to the wild misrule of all those depravities which agitate and deform our ruined nature.

The very same exhibition of our nature may be witnessed in almost every parish of our sister kingdom, where the people render a revenue to the minister of religion, and the minister renders back again a return, it is true—but not such a return, as, in the estimation of gross and ordinary selfishness, is at all deemed an equivalent for the sacrifice which has been made. In

this instance, too, that law of reciprocity which reigns throughout the common transactions of merchandise, is altogether suspended; and the consequence is, that the law of right is trampled into ashes. A tide of public odium runs against the men who are outraged of their property, and a smile of general connivance rewards the successful dexterity of the men who invade it. That portion of the annual produce of our soil, which, on a foundation of legitimacy as firm as the property of the soil itself, is allotted to a set of national functionaries—and which, but for them, would all have gone, in the shape of increased revenue, to the indolent proprietor, is altogether thrown loose from the guardianship of that great principle of reciprocity, on which we strongly suspect that the honesties of this world are mainly supported. The national clergy of England may be considered as standing out of the pale of this guardianship; and the consequence is, that what is most rightfully and most sacredly theirs, is abandoned to the gambol of many thousand depredators; and, in addition to a load of most unmerited obloquy, have they had to sustain all the heartburnings of known and felt injustice; and that intercourse between the teachers and the taught, which ought surely to be an intercourse of peace and friendship and righteousness, is turned into a contest between the natural avarice of the one party and the natural resentments of the other. It is not that we wish our sister Church were swept away, for we honestly think, that the overthrow of that Establishment would be a severe blow to the Christianity of our land. It is not that we envy that great hierarchy the splendour of her endowments—for better a dinner of herbs, when surrounded by the love of parishioners, than a preferment of stalled dignity, and strife therewith. It is not either that we look upon her ministers as having at all disgraced themselves by their rapacity; for look to the amount of the encroachments that are made upon them, and we shall see that they have carried their privileges with the most exemplary forbearance and moderation. But, from these very encroachments do we infer how lawless a human being will become, when emancipated from the bond of his own interest; how much such a state of things must multiply the temptations to injustice over the face of the country; and how desirable, therefore, that it were put an end to—not by the abolition of that venerable Church, but by a fair and liberal commutation of the revenues which support her—not by bringing any blight on the property of her ecclesiastics,

but by the removal of a most devouring blight from the worth of her population—that every provocative to injustice may be done away, and the frailty of human principle be no longer left to such a ruinous and such a withering exposure.

This instance we would not have mentioned, but for the sake of adding another experimental proof to the lesson of our text ; and we now hasten onward to the lesson itself, with a few of its applications.

We trust you are convinced, from what has been said, that much of the actual honesty of the world is due to the selfishness of the world. And then you will surely admit, that, in as far as this is the actuating principle, honesty descends from its place as a rewardable, or even as an amiable virtue, and sinks down into the character of a mere prudential virtue—which, so far from conferring any moral exaltation on him by whom it is exemplified, emanates out of a propensity that seems inseparable from the constitution of every sentient being—and by which man is, in one point, assimilated either to the most worthless of his own species, or to those inferior animals among whom worth is unattainable.

And let it not deafen the humbling impression of this argument, that you are not distinctly conscious of the operation of selfishness, as presiding at every step over the honesty of your daily and familiar transactions ; and that the only inward checks against injustice, of which you are sensible, are the aversion of a generous indignancy towards it, and the positive discomfort you would incur by the reproaches of your own conscience. Selfishness, in fact, may have originated and alimeted the whole of this virtue that belongs to you, and yet the mind incur the same discomfort by the violation of it, that it would do by the violation of any other of its established habits. And as to the generous indignancy of your feelings against all that is fraudulently and disgracefully wrong, let us never forget, that this may be the nurtured fruit of that common selfishness which links human beings with each other into a relationship of mutual dependence. This may be seen, in all its perfection, among the leagued and sworn banditti of the highway ; who, while execrated by society at large for the compact of iniquity into which they have entered, can maintain the most heroic fidelity to the virtues of their own brotherhood ; and be, in every way, as lofty and as chivalrous with their points of honour, as we are with ours ; and elevate as indignant a voice against the worth-

lessness of him who could betray the secret of their association, or break up any of the securities by which it was held together. And, in like manner, may we be the members of a wider combination, yet brought together by the tie of reciprocal interest; and all the virtues essential to the existence, or to the good of such a combination, may come to be idolized amongst us; and the breath of human applause may fan them into a lustre of splendid estimation; and yet the good man of society on earth be, in common with all his fellows, an utter outcast from the society of heaven—with his heart altogether bereft of that allegiance to God which forms the reigning principle of his unfallen creation—and in a state of entire destitution either as to that love of the Supreme Being, or as to that disinterested love of those around us, which form the graces and the virtues of eternity.

We have not affirmed that there is no such thing as a native and disinterested principle of honour among men. But we have affirmed, on a former occasion, that a sense of honour may be in the heart, and the sense of God be utterly away from it. And we affirm now, that much of the honest practice of the world is not due to honesty of principle at all, but takes its origin from a baser ingredient of our constitution altogether. How wide is the operation of selfishness on the one hand, and how limited is the operation of abstract principle on the other, it were difficult to determine; and such a labyrinth to man is his own heart, that he may be utterly unable, from his own consciousness, to answer this question. But amid all the difficulties of such an analysis to himself, we ask him to think of another who is unseen by us, but who is represented to us as seeing all things. We know not in what characters this heavenly witness can be more impressively set forth, than as pondering the heart, as weighing the secrets of the heart, as fastening an attentive and a judging eye on all the movements of it, as treasuring up the whole of man's outward and inward history in a book of remembrance; and as keeping it in reserve for that day when, it is said, that the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open, and God shall bring out every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Your consciousness may not distinctly inform you, in how far the integrity of your habits is due to the latent operation of selfishness, or to the more direct and obvious operation of honour. But your consciousness may, perhaps, inform you, distinctly enough, how little a share the will of God

has in the way of influence on any of your doings. Your own sense and memory of what passes within you may charge you with the truth of this monstrous indictment—that you live without God in the world; that however you may be signalized among your fellows, by that worth of character which is held in highest value and demand amongst the individuals of a mercantile society, it is at least without the influence of a godly principle that you have reached the maturity of an established reputation; that either the proud emotions of rectitude which glow within your bosom are totally untinged by a feeling of homage to the Deity—or that, without any such emotions, Self is the divinity you have all along worshipped, and your very virtues are so many offerings of reverence at her shrine. If such be, in fact, the nakedness of your spiritual condition, is it not high time, we ask, that you awaken out of this delusion, and shake the lying spirit of deep and heavy slumber away from you? Is it not high time, when eternity is so fast coming on, that you examine your accounts with God, and seek for a settlement with that Being who will so soon meet your disembodied spirits with the question of—what have you done unto me? And if all the virtues which adorn you are but the subserviencies of time, and of its accommodations—if either done altogether unto yourselves, or done without the recognition of God on the spontaneous instigation of your own feelings—is it not high time that you lean no longer to the securities on which you have rested, and that you seek for acceptance with your Maker on a more firm and unalterable foundation?

This, then, is the terminating object of all the experience that we have tried to set before you. We want it to be a school-master to bring you unto Christ. We want you to open your eyes to the accordancy which obtains between the theology of the New Testament, and the actual state and history of man. Above all, we want you to turn your eyes inwardly upon yourselves, and there to behold a character without one trace or lineament of godliness—there to behold a heart, set upon totally other things than those which constitute the portion and the reward of eternity—there to behold every principle of action resolvable into the idolatry of self, or, at least, into something independent of the authority of God—there to behold how worthless in their substance are those virtues which look so imposing in their semblance and their display, and draw around them here a popularity and an applause which will all be dissipated

into nothing, when hereafter they are brought up for examination to the judgment-seat. We want you when the revelation of the gospel charges you with the totality and magnitude of your corruption, that you acquiesce in that charge; and that you may perceive the trueness of it, under the disguise of all those hollow and unsubstantial accomplishments with which nature may deck her own fallen and degenerate children. It is easy to be amused, and interested, and intellectually regaled, by an analysis of the human character, and a survey of human society. But it is not so easy to reach the individual conscience with the lesson—we are undone. It is not so easy to strike the alarm into your hearts of the present guilt, and the future damnation. It is not so easy to send the pointed arrow of conviction into your bosoms, where it may keep by you, and pursue you like an arrow sticking fast; or so to humble you into the conclusion, that, in the sight of God, you are an accursed thing, as that you may seek unto Him who became a curse for you, and as that the preaching of His cross might cease to be foolishness.

Be assured, then, if you keep by the ground of being justified by your present works, you will perish; and though we may not have succeeded in convincing you of their worthlessness, be assured, that a day is coming, when such a flaw of deceitfulness, in the principle of them all, shall be laid open, as will demonstrate the equity of your entire and everlasting condemnation. To avert the fearfulness of that day is the message of the great atonement sounded in your ears; and the blood of Christ, cleansing from all sin, is offered to your acceptance; and if you turn away from it, you add to the guilt of a broken law the insult of a neglected gospel. But if you take the pardon of the gospel on the footing of the gospel, then, such is the efficacy of this great expedient, that it will reach an application of mercy farther than the eye of your own conscience ever reached; that it will redeem you from the guilt even of your most secret and unsuspected iniquities; and thoroughly wash you from a taint of sinfulness, more inveterate than, in the blindness of nature, you ever thought of, or ever conceived to belong to you.

But when a man becomes a believer, there are two great events which take place at this great turning-point in his history. One of them takes place in heaven—even the expunging of his name from the book of condemnation. Another of them takes place on earth—even the application of such a sanctifying influence to his person, that all old things are done away with

him, and all things becomes new with him. He is made the workmanship of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. He is not merely forgiven the sin of every one evil work of which he had aforetime been guilty, but he is created anew unto the corresponding good work. And, therefore, if a Christian, will his honesty be purified from that taint of selfishness by which the general honesty of this world is so deeply and extensively pervaded. He will not do this good thing, that any good thing may be done unto him again. He will do it on a simple regard to its own native and independent rectitude. He will do it because it is honourable, and because God wills him so to adorn the doctrine of his Saviour. All his fair dealing, and all his friendship, will be fair dealing and friendship without interest. The principle that is in him will stand in no need of aid from any such auxiliary—but, strong in its own unborrowed resources, will it impress a legible stamp of dignity and uprightness on the whole variety of his transactions in the world. All men find it their advantage, by the integrity of their dealings, to prolong the existence of some gainful fellowship into which they may have entered. But with him, the same unsullied integrity which kept this fellowship together, and sustained the progress of it, will abide with him through its last transactions, and dignify its full and final termination. Most men find, that, without the reverberation of any mischief on their own heads, they could reduce, beneath the point of absolute justice, the charges of taxation. But he has a conscience both towards God, and towards man, which will not let him; and there is a rigid truth in all his returns, a pointed and precise accuracy in all his payments. When hemmed in with circumstances of difficulty, and evidently tottering to his fall, the demand of nature is, that he should ply his every artifice to secrete a provision for his family. But a Christian mind is incapable of artifice; and the voice of conscience within him will ever be louder than the voice of necessity; and he will be open as day with his creditors, nor put forth his hand to that which is rightfully theirs, any more than he would put forth his hand to the perpetration of a sacrilege; and though released altogether from that tie of interest which binds a man to equity with his fellows, yet the tie of principle will remain with him in all its strength. Nor will it ever be found that he, for the sake of subsistence, will enter into fraud, seeing that, as one of the children of light, he would not, to gain the whole world, lose his own soul.

## DISCOURSE IV.

THE GUILT OF DISHONESTY NOT TO BE ESTIMATED BY THE GAIN OF IT.

“He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.”—LUKE xvi. 10.

It is the fine poetical conception of a late poetical countryman, whose fancy too often grovelled among the despicable of human character—but who, at the same time, was capable of exhibiting, either in pleasing or in proud array, both the tender and the noble of human character—when he says of the man who carried a native unborrowed self-sustained rectitude in his bosom, that “his eye, even turned on empty space, beamed keen with honour.” It was affirmed, in the last discourse, that much of the honourable practice of the world rested on the substratum of selfishness; that society was held together in the exercise of its relative virtues, mainly, by the tie of reciprocal advantage; that a man’s own interest bound him to all those average equities which obtained in the neighbourhood around him; and in which, if he proved himself to be glaringly deficient, he would be abandoned by the respect, and the confidence, and the good-will, of the people with whom he had to do. It is a melancholy thought, how little the semblance of virtue upon earth betokens the real and substantial presence of virtuous principle among men. But, on the other hand, though it be a rare, there cannot be a more dignified attitude of the soul, than when of itself it kindles with a sense of justice, and the holy flame is fed, as it were, by its own energies; than when man moves onwards in an unchanging course of moral magnanimity, and disdains the aid of those inferior principles by which gross and sordid humanity is kept from all the grosser violations; than when he rejoices in truth as his kindred and congenial element;—so that, though unpeopled of all its terrestrial accompaniments; though he saw no interest whatever to be associated with its fulfilment; though without one prospect either of fame



or of emolument before him, would his eye, even when turned on emptiness itself, still retain the living lustre that had been lighted up in it, by a feeling of inward and independent reverence.

It has already been observed, and that fully and frequently enough, that a great part of the homage which is rendered to integrity in the world, is due to the operation of selfishness. And this substantially is the reason, why the principle of the text has so very slender a hold upon the human conscience. Man is ever prone to estimate the enormity of injustice, by the degree in which he suffers from it. He brings this moral question to the standard of his own interest. A master will bear with all the lesser liberties of his servants, so long as he feels them to be harmless; and it is not till he is awakened to the apprehension of personal injury from the amount or frequency of the embezzlements, that his moral indignation is at all sensibly awakened. And thus it is, that the maxim of our great Teacher of righteousness seems to be very much unfelt, or forgotten, in society. Unfaithfulness in that which is little, and unfaithfulness in that which is much, are very far from being regarded, as they were by Him, under the same aspect of criminality. If there be no great hurt, it is felt that there is no great harm. The innocence of a dishonest freedom in respect of morality, is rated by its insignificance in respect of matter. The margin which separates the right from the wrong is remorselessly trodden under foot, so long as each makes only a minute and gentle encroachment beyond the landmark of his neighbour's territory. On this subject there is a loose and popular estimate, which is not at one with the deliverance of the New Testament; a habit of petty invasion on the side of aggressors, which is scarcely felt by them to be at all iniquitous—and even on the part of those who are thus made free with there is a habit of loose and careless toleration. There is, in fact, a negligence or a dormancy of principle among men, which causes this sort of injustice to be easily practised on the one side, and as easily put up with on the other; and, in a general slackness of observation, is this virtue, in its strictness and in its delicacy, completely overborne.

It is the taint of selfishness, then, which has so marred and corrupted the moral sensibility of our world. And the man, if such a man can be, whose "eye, even turned on empty space, beams keen with honour;" and whose homage, therefore, to

the virtue of justice, is altogether freed from the mixture of unworthy and interested feelings, will alone render to her, in every instance, a faultless and a completed offering. Whatever his forbearance to others, he could not suffer the slightest blot of corruption upon any doings of his own. He cannot be satisfied with anything short of the very last jot and tittle of the requirements of equity being fulfilled. He not merely shares in the revolt of the general world against such outrageous departures from the rule of right, as would carry in their train the ruin of acquaintances or the distress of families. Such is the delicacy of the principle within him, that he could not have peace under the consciousness even of the minutest and least discoverable violation. He looks fully and fearlessly at the whole account which justice has against him; and he cannot rest, so long as there is a single article unmet, or a single demand unsatisfied. If, in any transaction of his, there was so much as a farthing of secret and injurious reservation on his side, this would be to him like an accursed thing, which marred the character of the whole proceeding, and spread over it such an aspect of evil, as to offend and disturb him. He could not bear the whisperings of his own heart, if it told him, that, in so much as by one iota of defect, he had balanced the matter unfairly between himself and the unconscious individual with whom he deals. It would lie a burden upon his mind to hurt and to make him unhappy, till the opportunity of explanation had come round, and he had obtained ease to his conscience, by acquitting himself to the full of all his obligations. It is justice in the uprightness of her attitude; it is justice in the onwardness of her path; it is justice disdaining every advantage that would tempt her, by ever so little, to the right or to the left; it is justice spurning the littleness of each paltry enticement away from her, and maintaining herself, without deviation, in a track so purely rectilinear, that even the most jealous and microscopic eye could not find in it the slightest aberration: this is the justice set forth by our great moral Teacher in the passage now submitted to you; and by which we are told, that this virtue refuses fellowship with every degree of iniquity that is perceptible; and that, were the very least act of unfaithfulness admitted, she would feel as if in her sanctity she had been violated, as if in her character she had sustained an overthrow.

In the further prosecution of this discourse, let us first attempt to elucidate the principle of our text, and then urge it onward to

its practical consequences—both as it respects our general relation to God, and as it respects the particular lesson of faithfulness that may be educed from it.

I. The great principle of the text is, that he who has sinned, though to a small amount in respect of the fruit of his transgression—provided he has done so, by passing over a forbidden limit which was distinctly known to him, has, in the act of doing so, incurred a full condemnation in respect of the principle of his transgression. In one word, that the gain of it may be small, while the guilt of it may be great; that the latter ought not to be measured by the former; but that he who is unfaithful in the least, shall be dealt with, in respect of the offence he has given to God, in the same way as if he had been unfaithful in much.

The first reason which we would assign in vindication of this is, that, by a small act of injustice, the line which separates the right from the wrong, is just as effectually broken over as by a great act of injustice. There is a tendency in gross and corporeal man to rate the criminality of injustice by the amount of its appropriations—to reduce it to a computation of weight and of measure—to count the man who has gained a double sum by his dishonesty, to be doubly more dishonest than his neighbour—to make it an affair of product rather than of principle; and thus to weigh the morality of a character in the same arithmetical balance with number or with magnitude. Now, this is not the rule of calculation on which our Saviour has proceeded in the text. He speaks to the man who is only half an inch within the limits of forbidden ground, in the very same terms by which he addresses the man who has made the farthest and the largest incursions upon it. It is true, that he is only a little way upon the wrong side of the line of demarcation. But why is he upon it at all? It was in the act of crossing that line, and not in the act of going onwards after he had crossed it—it was then that the contest between right and wrong was entered upon, and then it was decided. That was the instant of time at which principle struck her surrender. The great pull which the man had to make, was in the act of overleaping the fence of separation; and after that was done, justice had no other barrier by which to obstruct his progress over the whole extent of the field which she had interdicted. There might be barriers of a different description. There might be still a revolting of humanity against the sufferings that would be inflicted by an act of larger fraud or

degradation. There might be a dread of exposure, if the dishonesty should so swell, in point of amount, as to become more noticeable. There might, after the absolute limit between justice and injustice is broken, be another limit against the extending of a man's encroachments, in a terror of discovery, or in a sense of interest, or even in the relentings of a kindly or a compunctious feeling towards him who is the victim of injustice. But this is not the limit with which the question of a man's truth, or a man's honesty, has to do. These have already been given up. He may only be a little way within the margin of the unlawful territory, but still he is upon it; and the God who finds him there will reckon with him, and deal with him accordingly. Other principles, and other considerations, may restrain his progress to the very heart of the territory, but justice is not one of them. This he deliberately flung away from him, at that moment when he passed the line of circumvallation; and, though in the neighbourhood of that line, he may hover all his days at the petty work of picking and purloining such fragments as he meets with, though he may never venture himself to a place of more daring or distinguished atrocity, God sees of him, that, in respect of the principle of justice, at least, there is an utter unhingement. And thus it is, that the Saviour, who knew what was in man, and who, therefore, knew all the springs of that moral machinery by which he is actuated, pronounces of him who was unfaithful in the least, that he was unfaithful also in much.

After the transition is accomplished, the progress will follow of course, just as opportunity invites, and just as circumstances make it safe and practicable. For it is not with justice as it is with generosity, and some of the other virtues. There is not the same graduation in the former as there is in the latter. The man who, other circumstances being equal, gives away a double sum in charity, may, with more propriety, be reckoned doubly more generous than his neighbour; than the man who, with the same equality of circumstances, only ventures on half the extent of fraudulency, can be reckoned only one-half as unjust as his neighbour. Each has broken a clear line of demarcation. Each has transgressed a distinct and visible limit which he knew to be forbidden. Each has knowingly forced a passage beyond his neighbour's landmark—and that is the place where justice has laid the main force of her interdict. As it respects the *materiel* of injustice, the question resolves itself into a mere computation

of quantity. As it respects the *morale* of injustice, the computation is upon other principles. It is upon the latter that our Saviour pronounces himself. And he gives us to understand, that a very humble degree of the former may indicate the latter in all its atrocity. He stands on the breach between the lawful and the unlawful; and he tells us, that the man who enters by a single footstep on the forbidden ground, immediately gathers upon his person the full hue and character of guiltiness. He admits no extenuation of the lesser acts of dishonesty. He does not make right pass into wrong, by a gradual melting of the one into the other. He does not thus obliterate the distinctions of morality. There is no shading off at the margin of guilt, but a clear and vigorous delineation. It is not by a gentle transition that a man steps over from honesty to dishonesty. There is between them a wall rising up unto heaven; and the high authority of heaven must be stormed, ere one inch of entrance can be made into the region of iniquity. The morality of the Saviour never leads him to gloss over beginnings of crime. His object ever is, as in the text before us, to fortify the limit, to cast a rampart of exclusion around the whole territory of guilt, and to rear it before the eye of man in such characters of strength and sacredness as should make them feel that it is impregnable.

The second reason, why he who is unfaithful in the least has incurred the condemnation of him who is unfaithful in much, is, that the littleness of the gain, so far from giving a littleness to the guilt, is in fact a circumstance of aggravation. There is just this difference. He who has committed injustice for the sake of a less advantage, has done it on the impulse of a less temptation. He has parted with his honesty at an inferior price; and this circumstance may go so to equalize the estimate, as to bring it very much to one with the deliverance, in the text, of our great Teacher of righteousness. The limitation between good and evil stood as distinctly before the notice of the small as of the great depredator; and he has just made as direct a contravention to the first reason, when he passed over upon the wrong side of it. And he may have made little of gain by the enterprise, but this does not allay the guilt of it. Nay, by the second reason, this may serve to aggravate the wrath of the Divinity against him. It proves how small the price is which he sets upon his eternity, and how cheaply he can bargain the favour of God away from him, and how low he rates the good of an inheritance with Him, and for what a trifle he can dispose of

all interest in His kingdom and in His promises. The very circumstance which gives to his character a milder transgression in the eyes of the world, makes it more odious in the judgment of the sanctuary. The more paltry it is in respect of profit, the more profane it may be in respect of principle. It likens him the more to profane Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. And thus it is, indeed, most woful to think of such a senseless and alienated world; and how heedlessly the men of it are posting their infatuated way to destruction; and how, for as little gain as might serve them a day, they are contracting as much guilt as will ruin them for ever; and are profoundly asleep in the midst of such designs and such doings, as will form the valid materials of their entire and everlasting condemnation.

It is with argument such as this that we would try to strike conviction among a very numerous class of offenders in society—those who, in the various departments of trust, or service, or agency, are ever practising, in littles, at the work of secret appropriation—those whose hands are in a state of constant defilement, by the putting of them forth to that which they ought to touch not, and taste not, and handle not—those who silently number such pilferments as can pass unnoticed among the perquisites of their office; and who, by an excess in their charges, just so slight as to escape detection, or by a habit of purloining, just so restrained as to elude discovery, have both a conscience very much at ease in their own bosoms, and a credit very fair, and very entire, among their acquaintances around them. They grossly count upon the smallness of their transgression. But they are just going in a small way to hell. They would recoil with violent dislike from the act of a midnight depredator. It is just because terrors, and trials, and executions, have thrown around it the pomp and the circumstance of guilt. But at another bar, and on a day of more dreadful solemnity, their guilt will be made to stand out in its essential characters, and their condemnation will be pronounced from the lips of Him who judgeth righteously. They feel that they have incurred no outrageous forfeiture of character among men, and this instils a treacherous complacency into their own hearts. But the piercing eye of Him who looketh down from heaven is upon the reality of the question; and He who ponders the secrets of every bosom, can perceive, that the man who recoils only from such a degree of injustice as is notorious, may have no justice whatever in his character. He may have a sense of reputation. He may have

the fear of detection and disgrace. He may feel a revolt in his constitution against the magnitude of a gross and glaring violation. He may even share in all the feelings and principles of that conventional kind of morality which obtains in his neighbourhood. But, of that principle which is surrendered by the least act of unfaithfulness, he has no share whatever. He perceives no overawing sacredness in that boundary which separates the right from the wrong. If he only keep decently near, it is a matter of indifference to him whether he be on this or on that side of it. He can be unfaithful in that which is least. There may be other principles and other considerations to restrain him ; but certain it is, that it is not now the principle of justice which restrains him from being unfaithful in much. This is given up ; and, through a blindness to the great and important principle of our text, this virtue may, in its essential character, be as good as banished from the world. All its protections may be utterly overthrown. The line of defence is effaced by which it ought to have been firmly and scrupulously guarded. The sign-posts of intimation, which ought to warn and to scare away, are planted along the barrier ; and when, in defiance to them, the barrier is broken, man will not be checked by any sense of honesty at least, from expatiating over the whole of the forbidden territory. And thus may we gather from the countless peccadilloes which are so current in the various departments of trade, and service, and agency—from the secret freedoms in which many do indulge, without one remonstrance from their own hearts—from the petty inroads that are daily practised on the confines of justice, by which its line of demarcation is trodden under foot, and it has lost the moral distinctness, and the moral charm, that should have kept it inviolate—from the exceeding multitude of such offences as are frivolous in respect of the matter of them, but most fearfully important in respect of the principle in which they originate—from the woful amount of that unseen and unrecorded guilt which escapes the cognisance of human law, but, on the application of the touchstone in our text, may be made to stand out in characters of severest condemnation—from instances too numerous to repeat, but certainly too obvious to be missed, even by the observation of charity, may we gather the frailty of human principle, and the virulence of that moral poison, which is now in such full circulation to taint and to adulterate the character of our species.

Before finishing this branch of our subject, we may observe, that it is with this as with many other phenomena of the human character, that we are not long in contemplation upon it, without coming in sight of that great characteristic of fallen man, which meets and forces itself upon us in every view that we take of him—even the great moral disease of ungodliness. It is at the precise limit between the right and the wrong that the flaming sword of God's law is placed. It is there that "Thus saith the Lord" presents itself, in legible characters, to our view. It is there where the operation of His commandment begins; and not at any of those higher gradations, where a man's dishonesty first appals himself by the chance of its detection, or appals others by the mischief and insecurity which it brings upon social life. An extensive fraud upon the revenue, for example, unpopular as this branch of justice is, would bring a man down from his place of eminence and credit in mercantile society. That petty fraud which is associated with so many of those smaller payments, where a lie in the written acknowledgment is both given and accepted, as a way of escape from the legal imposition, circulates at large among the members of the great trading community. In the former, and in all the greater cases of injustice, there is a human restraint, and a human terror, in operation. There is disgrace and civil punishment to scare away. There are all the sanctions of that conventional morality which is suspended on the fear of man, and the opinion of man; and which, without so much as the recognition of a God, would naturally point its armour against every outrage that could sensibly disturb the securities and the rights of human society. But so long as the disturbance is not sensible—so long as the injustice keeps within the limits of smallness and secrecy—so long as it is safe for the individual to practise it, and, borne along on the tide of general example and connivance, he has nothing to restrain him but that distinct and inflexible word of God, which proscribes all unfaithfulness, and admits of it in no degrees, and no modifications—then, let the almost universal sleep of conscience attest, how little of God there is in the virtue of this world; and how much the peace and the protection of society are owing to such moralities, as the mere selfishness of man would lead him to ordain, even in a community of atheists.

II. Let us now attempt to unfold a few of the practical consequences that may be drawn from the principle of the text, both in respect to our general relation with God, and in respect



to the particular lesson of faithfulness which may be educed from it.

1. There cannot be a stronger possible illustration of our argument, than the very first act of retribution that occurred in the history of our species. "And God said unto Adam, Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. For in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. But the woman took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." What is it that invests the eating of a solitary apple with a grandeur so momentous? How came an action, in itself so minute, to be the germ of such mighty consequences? How are we to understand that our first parents, by the doing of a single instant, not only brought death upon themselves, but shed this big and baleful disaster over all their posterity? We may not be able to answer all these questions; but we may at least learn, what a thing of danger it is, under the government of a holy and inflexible God, to tamper with the limits of obedience. By the eating of that apple a clear requirement was broken, and a distinct transition was made from loyalty to rebellion, and an entrance was effected into the region of sin—and thus did this one act serve like the opening of a gate for a torrent of mighty mischief; and, if the act itself was a trifle, it just went to aggravate its guilt—that, for such a trifle, the authority of God could be despised and trampled on. At all events, His attribute of Truth stood committed to the fulfilment of the threatening; and the very insignificance of the deed, which provoked the execution of it, gives a sublimer character to the certainty of the fulfilment. We know how much this trait, in the dealings of God with man, has been the jeer of infidelity. But in all this ridicule, there is truly nothing else than the grossness of materialism. Had Adam, instead of plucking one single apple from the forbidden tree, been armed with the power of a malignant spirit, and spread a wanton havoc over the face of paradise, and spoiled the garden of its loveliness, and been able to mar and to deform the whole of that terrestrial creation over which God had so recently rejoiced—the punishment he sustained would have looked, to these arithmetical moralists, a more adequate return for the offence of which he had been guilty. They cannot see how the moral lesson rises in greatness, just in proportion to the humility of the material accompaniments—and how it wraps a sublimer glory around the holiness of the Godhead—and how

from the transaction, such as it is, the conclusion cometh forth more nakedly, and therefore more impressively, that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against the Lawgiver. God said, "Let there be light, and it was light;" and it has ever been regarded as a sublime token of the Deity, that, from an utterance so simple, an accomplishment so quick and so magnificent should have followed. God said that he who "eateth of the tree in the midst of the garden should die." It appears, indeed, but a little thing, that one should put forth his hand to an apple and taste of it. But a saying of God was involved in the matter; and heaven and earth must pass away, ere a saying of His can pass away; and so the apple became decisive of the fate of a world; and out of the very scantiness of the occasion, did there emerge a sublimer display of truth and of holiness. The beginning of the world was indeed the period of great manifestations of the Godhead; and they all seem to accord in style and character with each other; and in that very history, which has called forth the profane and unthinking levity of many a scorner, may we behold as much of the majesty of principle, as in the creation of light we behold of the majesty of power.

But this history furnishes the materials of a contemplation still more practical. If, for this one offence, Adam and his posterity have been so visited—if so rigorously and so inflexibly precise be the spirit of God's administration—if, under the economy of heaven, sin, even in the very humblest of its exhibitions, be the object of an intolerance so jealous and so unrelenting—if the Deity be such as this transaction manifests Him to be, disdainful of fellowship even with the very least iniquity, and dreadful in the certainty of all His accomplishments against it—if, for a single transgression, all the promise and all the felicity of paradise had to be broken up, and the wretched offenders had to be turned abroad upon a world, now changed by the curse into a wilderness, and their secure and lovely home of innocence behoved to be abandoned, and to keep them out a flaming sword had to turn every way, and guard their reaccess to the bowers of immortality—if sin be so very hateful in the eye of unspotted holiness, that, on its very first act, and first appearance, the wonted communion between heaven and earth was interdicted—if that was the time at which God looked on our species with an altered countenance, and one deed of disobedience proved so terribly decisive of the fate and history of a world—what should each individual

amongst us think of his own danger, whose life has been one continued habit of disobedience? If we be still in the hands of that God who laid so fell a condemnation on this one transgression, let us just think of our many transgressions, and that every hour we live multiplies the account of them; and that, however they may vanish from our own remembrance, they are still alive in the records of a judge whose eye and whose memory never fail Him. Let us transfer the lesson we have gotten of heaven's jurisprudence from the case of our first parents to our own case. Let us compare our lives with the law of God, and we shall find that our sins are past reckoning. Let us take account of the habitual posture of our souls, as a posture of dislike for the things that are above, and we shall find that our thoughts and our desires are ever running in one current of sinfulness. Let us just make the computation how often we fail in the bidden charity, and the bidden godliness, and the bidden long-suffering—all as clearly bidden as the duty that was laid on our first parents—and we shall find, that we are borne down under a mountain of iniquity; that, in the language of the Psalmist, our transgressions have gone over our heads, and, as a heavy burden, are too heavy for us; and if we be indeed under the government of Him who followed up the offence of the stolen apple by so dreadful a chastisement, then is wrath gone out unto the uttermost against every one of us. There is something in the history of that apple which might be brought specially to bear on the case of those small sinners who practise in secret at the work of their petty depredations. But it also carries in it a great and a universal moral. It tells us that no sin is small. It serves a general purpose of conviction. It holds out a most alarming disclosure of the charge that is against us; and makes it manifest to the conscience of him who is awakened thereby, that, unless God Himself point out a way of escape, we are indeed most hopelessly sunk in condemnation. And, seeing that such wrath went out from the sanctuary of this unchangeable God, on the one offence of our first parents, it irresistibly follows, that if we, manifold in guilt, take not ourselves to His appointed way of reconciliation—if we refuse the overtures of Him, who then so visited the one offence through which all are dead, but is now laying before us all that free gift, which is of many offences unto justification—in other words, if we will not enter into peace through the offered Mediator, how much greater must be the wrath that abideth on us?

Now, let the sinner have his conscience schooled by such a contemplation, and there will be no rest whatever for his soul till he find it in the Saviour. Let him only learn, from the dealings of God with the first Adam, what a God of holiness he himself has to deal with ; and let him further learn, from the history of the second Adam, that, to manifest Himself as a God of love, another righteousness had to be brought in, in place of that from which man had fallen so utterly away. There was a faultless obedience rendered by Him, of whom it is said, that He fulfilled all righteousness. There was a magnifying of the law by one in human form, who, up to the last jot and tittle of it, acquitted Himself of all its obligations. There was a pure, and lofty, and undefiled path, trodden by a holy and harmless Being, who gave not up His work upon earth, till, ere He left it, He could cry out, that It was finished ; and so had wrought out for us a perfect righteousness. Now, it forms the most prominent annunciation of the New Testament, that the reward of this righteousness is offered unto all—so that there is not one of us who is not put by the gospel upon the alternative of being either tried by our own merits, or treated according to the merits of Him who became sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Let the sinner just look unto himself, and look unto the Saviour. Let him advert not to his one, but to his many offences ; and that, too, in the sight of a God, who, but for one so slight and so insignificant in respect of the outward description, as the eating of a forbidden apple, threw off a world into banishment, and entailed a sentence of death upon all its generations. Let him learn from this, that for sin, even in its humblest degrees, there exists in the bosom of the Godhead no toleration ; and how shall he dare, with the degree and the frequency of his own sin, to stand any longer on a ground, where if he remain, the fierceness of a consuming fire is so sure to overtake him ? The righteousness of Christ is without a flaw, and there he is invited to take shelter. Under the actual regimen, which God has established in our world, it is indeed his only security—his refuge from the tempest, and hiding-place from the storm. The only beloved Son offers to spread His own unspotted garment as a protection over him ; and, if he be rightly alive to the utter nakedness of his moral and spiritual condition, he will indeed make no tarrying till he be found in Christ, and find that in Him there is no condemnation.

Now, it is worthy of remark, that those principles, which shut a man up unto the faith, do not take flight and abandon him, after they have served this temporary purpose. They abide with him, and work their appropriate influence on his character, and serve as the germ of a new moral creation; and we can afterwards detect their operation in his heart and life; so that, if they were present at the formation of a saving belief, they are not less unfailingly present with every true Christian, throughout the whole of his future history, as the elements of a renovated conduct. If it was sensibility to the evil of sin which helped to wean the man from himself, and led him to his Saviour, this sensibility does not fall asleep in the bosom of an awakened sinner, after Christ has given him light—but it grows with the growth, and strengthens with the strength of his Christianity. If, at the interesting period of his transition from nature to grace, he saw, even in the very least of his offences, a deadly provocation of the Lawgiver, he does not lose sight of this consideration in his future progress—nor does it barely remain with him, like one of the unproductive notions of an inert and unproductive theory. It gives rise to a fearful jealousy in his heart of the least appearance of evil; and, with every man who has undergone a genuine process of conversion, do we behold the scrupulous avoidance of sin, in its most slender, as well as in its more aggravated forms. If it was the perfection of the character of Christ who felt that it became Him to fulfil all righteousness, that offered him the first solid foundation on which he could lean—then the same character, which first drew his eye for the purpose of confidence, still continues to draw his eye for the purpose of imitation. At the outset of faith, all the essential moralities of thought, and feeling, and conviction, are in play; nor is there anything in the progress of a real faith which is calculated to throw them back again into the dormancy out of which they had arisen. They break out, in fact, into more full and flourishing display on every new creature, with every new step and new evolution in his mental history. All the principles of the gospel serve, as it were, to fan and to perpetuate his hostility against sin; and all the powers of the gospel enable him more and more to fulfil the desires of his heart, and to carry his purposes of hostility into execution. In the case of every genuine believer, who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, do we behold a fulfilling of the righteousness of the law—a strenuous avoidance of sin, in its slightest possible

taint or modification—a strenuous performance of duty, up to the last jot and tittle of its exactions—so that, let the untrue professors of the faith do what they will in the way of antinomianism, and let the enemies of the faith say what they will about our antinomianism, the real spirit of the dispensation under which we live is such, that whosoever shall break one of the least of these commandments, and teach men so, is accounted the least—whosoever shall do and teach them is accounted the greatest.

2. Let us, therefore, urge the spirit and the practice of this lesson upon your observation. The place for the practice of it is the familiar and week-day scene. The principle for the spirit of it descends upon the heart, from the sublimest heights of the sanctuary of God. It is not vulgarizing Christianity to bring it down to the very humblest occupations of human life. It is, in fact, dignifying human life, by bringing it up to the level of Christianity. It may look to some a degradation of the pulpit, when the household servant is told to make her firm stand against the temptation of open doors, and secret opportunities; or when the confidential agent is told to resist the slightest inclination to any unseen freedom with the property of his employers, or to any undiscoverable excess in the charges of his management; or when the receiver of a humble payment is told, that the tribute which is due on every written acknowledgment ought faithfully to be met, and not fictitiously to be evaded. This is not robbing religion of its sacredness, but spreading its sacredness over the face of society. It is evangelizing human life, by impregnating its minutest transactions with the spirit of the gospel. It is strengthening the wall of partition between sin and obedience. It is the teacher of righteousness taking his stand at the outpost of that territory which he is appointed to defend, and warning his hearers of the danger that lies in a single footstep of encroachment. It is letting them know, that it is in the act of stepping over the limit, that the sinner throws the gauntlet of his defiance against the authority of God. And though he may deceive himself with the imagination that his soul is safe, because the gain of his injustice is small, such is the God with whom he has to do, that, if it be gain to the value of a single apple, then, within the compass of so small an outward dimension, may as much guilt be enclosed as that which hath brought death into our world, and carried it down in a descending ruin upon all its generations.

It may appear a very little thing, when you are told to be

honest in little matters ; when the servant is told to keep her hand from every one article about which there is not an express or understood allowance on the part of her superiors ; when the dealer is told to lop off the excesses of that minuter fraudulency, which is so currently practised in the humble walks of merchandise ; when the workman is told to abstain from those petty reservations of the material of his work, for which he is said to have such snug and ample opportunity ; and when, without pronouncing on the actual extent of these transgressions, all are told to be faithful in that which is least, else, if there be truth in our text, they incur the guilt of being unfaithful in much. It may be thought, that because such dishonesties as these are scarcely noticeable, they are therefore not worthy of notice. But it is just in the proportion of their being unnoticeable by the human eye, that it is religious to refrain from them. These are the cases in which it will be seen, whether the control of the omniscience of God makes up for the control of human observation—in which the sentiment, that Thou, God, seest me ! should carry a preponderance through all the secret places of a man's history—in which, when every earthly check of an earthly morality is withdrawn, it should be felt that the eye of God is upon him, and that the judgment of God is in reserve for him. To him who is gifted with a true discernment of these matters, will it appear, that often, in proportion to the smallness of the doings, is the sacredness of that principle which causes them to be done with integrity ; that honesty, in little transactions, bears upon it more of the aspect of holiness than honesty in great ones ; that the man of deepest sensibility to the obligations of the law, is he who feels the quickening of moral alarm at its slightest violations ; that, in the morality of grains and of scruples, there may be a greater tenderness of conscience, and a more heaven-born sanctity, than in that larger morality which flashes broadly and observably upon the world ;—and that thus, in the faithfulness of the household maid, or of the apprentice boy, there may be the presence of a truer principle, than there is in the more conspicuous transactions of human business—what they do, being done, not with eye-service—what they do, being done unto the Lord.

And here we remark, that nobleness of condition is not essential as a school for nobleness of character ; nor does man require to be high in office, ere he can gather around his person the worth and the lustre of a high-minded integrity. It is delightful

to think, that humble life may be just as rich in moral grace and moral grandeur as the loftier places of society; that as true a dignity of principle may be earned by him who, in homeliest drudgery, plies his conscientious task, as by him who stands intrusted with the fortunes of an empire; that the poorest menial in the land, who can lift a hand unsoiled by the pilferments that are within his reach, may have achieved a victory over temptation, to the full as honourable as the proudest patriot can boast, who has spurned the bribery of courts away from him. It is cheering to know, from the heavenly Judge Himself, that he who is faithful in the least, is faithful also in much; and that thus, among the labours of the field and of the work-shop, it is possible for the peasant to be as bright in honour as the peer, and have the chivalry of as much truth and virtue to adorn him.

And, as this lesson is not little in respect of principle, so neither is it little in respect of influence on the order and well-being of human society. He who is unjust in the least, is, in respect of guilt, unjust also in much. And to reverse this proposition, as it is done in the first clause of our text—he who is faithful in that which is least, is, in respect both of righteous principle and of actual observation, faithful also in much. Who is the man to whom I would most readily confide the whole of my property? He who would most disdain to put forth an injurious hand on a single farthing of it. Who is the man from whom I would have the least dread of any unrighteous encroachment? He, all the delicacies of whose principle are awakened when he comes within sight of the limit which separates the region of justice from the region of injustice. Who is the man whom we shall never find among the greater degrees of iniquity? He who shrinks with sacred abhorrence from the lesser degrees of it. It is a true, though a homely maxim of economy, that if we take care of our small sums, our great sums will take care of themselves. And, to pass from our own things to the things of others, it is no less true, that if principle should lead us all to maintain the care of strictest honesty over our neighbour's pennies, then will his pounds lie secure from the grasp of injustice, behind the barrier of a moral impossibility. This lesson, if carried into effect among you, would so strengthen all the ramparts of security between man and man, as to make them utterly impassable; and therefore, while, in the matter of it, it may look, in one view, as one of the least of the commandments, it, in regard both of principle and of effect, is



in another view of it one of the greatest of the commandments. And we therefore conclude with assuring you, that nothing will spread the principle of this commandment to any great extent throughout the mass of society, but the principle of godliness. Nothing will secure the general observation of justice amongst us, in its punctuality and in its preciseness, but such a precise Christianity as many affirm to be puritanical. In other words, the virtues of society, to be kept in a healthful and prosperous condition, must be upheld by the virtues of the sanctuary. Human law may restrain many of the grosser violations. But without religion among the people, justice will never be in extensive operation as a moral principle. A vast proportion of the species will be as unjust as the vigilance and the severities of law allow them to be. A thousand petty dishonesties, which never will, and never can be brought within the cognisance of any of our courts of administration, will still continue to derange the business of human life, and to stir up all the heartburnings of suspicion and resentment among the members of human society. And it is, indeed, a triumphant reversion awaiting the Christianity of the New Testament, when it shall become manifest as day, that it is her doctrine alone, which, by its searching and sanctifying influence, can so moralize our world—as that each may sleep secure in the lap of his neighbour's integrity, and the charm of confidence between man and man will at length be felt in the business of every town, and in the bosom of every family.

## DISCOURSE V.

ON THE GREAT CHRISTIAN LAW OF RECIPROCITY BETWEEN MAN AND MAN.

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the law and the prophets.”—MATT. vi. 12.

THERE are two great classes in human society, between whom there lie certain mutual claims and obligations, which are felt by some to be of very difficult adjustment. There are those who have requests of some kind or other to make ; and there are those to whom the requests are made, and with whom there is lodged the power either to grant or to refuse them. Now, at first sight, it would appear, that the firm exercise of this power of refusal is the only barrier by which the latter class can be secured against the indefinite encroachments of the former ; and that, if this were removed, all the safeguards of right and property would be removed along with it. The power of refusal, on the part of those who have the right of refusal, may be abolished by an act of violence, on the part of those who have it not ; and then, when this happens in individual cases, we have the crimes of assault and robbery ; and when it happens on a more extended scale, we have anarchy and insurrection in the land. Or the power of refusal may be taken away by an authoritative precept of religion ; and then might it still be matter of apprehension, lest our only defence against the inroads of selfishness and injustice were as good as given up, and lest the peace and interest of families should be laid open to a most fearful exposure, by the enactments of a romantic and impracticable system. Whenever this is apprehended, the temptation is strongly felt, either to rid ourselves of the enactments altogether, or at least to bring them down in nearer accommodation to the feelings and the conveniences of men.

And Christianity, on the very first blush of it, appears to be precisely such a religion. It seems to take away all lawfulness of resistance from the possessor, and to invest the demander with such an extent of privilege, as would make the two classes of society to which we have just now adverted, speedily change

places. And this is the true secret of the many laborious deviations that have been attempted, in this branch of morality, on the obvious meaning of the New Testament. This is the secret of those many qualifying clauses, by which its most luminous announcements have been beset, to the utter darkening of them. This it is which explains the many sad invasions that have been made on the most manifest and undeniable literalities of the law and of the testimony. And our present text, among others, has received its full share of mutilation, and of what may be called "dressing up," from the hands of commentators—it having wakened the very alarms of which we have just spoken, and called forth the very attempts to quiet and to subdue them. Surely, it has been said, we can never be required to do unto others what they have no right, and no reason, to expect from us. The demand must not be an extravagant one. It must lie within the limits of moderation. It must be such as, in the estimation of every justly thinking person, is counted fair in the circumstances of the case. The principle on which our Saviour, in the text, rests the obligation of doing any particular thing to others, is, that we wish others to do that thing unto us. But this is too much for an affrighted selfishness; and, for her own protection, she would put forth a defensive sophistry upon the subject; and in place of that distinctly announced principle, on which the Bible both directs and specifies what the things are which we should do unto others, does she substitute another principle entirely—which is, merely to do unto others such things as are fair, and right, and reasonable.

Now, there is one clause of this verse which would appear to lay a positive interdict on all these qualifications. How shall we dispose of a phrase, so sweeping and universal in its import, as that of "all things whatsoever"? We cannot think that such an expression as this was inserted for nothing, by Him who has told us, that "cursed is every one who taketh away from the words of this book." There is no distinction laid down between things fair and things unfair—between things reasonable and things unreasonable. Both are comprehended in the "all things whatsoever." The signification is plain and absolute, that, let the thing be what it may, if you wish others to do that thing for you, it lies imperatively upon you to do the very same thing for them also.

But, at this rate, you may think that the whole system of human intercourse would go into unhingement. You may wish

your next-door neighbour to present you with half his fortune. In this case, we know not how you are to escape from the conclusion, that you are bound to present him with the half of yours. Or you may wish a relative to burden himself with the expenses of all your family. It is then impossible to save you from the positive obligation, if you are equally able for it, of doing the same service to the family of another. Or you may wish to engross the whole time of an acquaintance in personal attendance upon yourself. Then, it is just your part to do the same extent of civility to another who may desire it. These are only a few specifications, out of the manifold varieties, whether of service or of donation, which are conceivable between one man and another; nor are we aware of any artifice of explanation by which they can possibly be detached from the "all things whatsoever" of the verse before us. These are literalities which we are not at liberty to compromise—but are bound to urge, and that simply, according to the terms in which they have been conveyed to us by the great Teacher of righteousness. This may raise a sensitive dread in many a bosom. It may look like the opening of a floodgate, through which a torrent of human rapacity would be made to set in on the fair and measured domains of property, and by which all the fences of legality would be overthrown. It is some such fearful anticipation as this which causes casuistry to ply its wily expedients, and busily to devise its many limits and its many exceptions to the morality of the New Testament. And yet we think it possible to demonstrate of our text, that no such modifying is requisite; and that, though admitted strictly and rigorously as the rule of our daily conduct, it would lead to no practical conclusions which are at all formidable.

For, what is the precise circumstance which lays the obligation of this precept upon you? There may be other places in the Bible where you are required to do things for the benefit of your neighbour, whether you would wish your neighbour to do these things for your benefit or not. But this is not the requirement here. There is none other thing laid upon you in this place, than that you should do that good action in behalf of another, which you would like that other to do in behalf of yourself. If you would not like him to do it for you, then there is nothing in the compass of this sentence now before you, that at all obligates you to do it for him. If you would not like your neighbour to make so romantic a surrender to your

interest, as to offer you to the extent of half his fortune, then there is nothing in that part of the gospel code which now engages us, that renders it imperative upon you to make the same offer to your neighbour. If you would positively recoil, in all the reluctance of ingenuous delicacy, from the selfishness of laying on a relation the burden of the expenses of all your family, then this is not the good office that you would have him to do unto you; and this, therefore, is not the good office which the text prescribes you to do unto him. If you have such consideration for another's ease, and another's convenience, that you could not take the ungenerous advantage of so much of his time for your accommodation, there may be other verses in the Bible which point to a greater sacrifice, on your part, for the good of others, than you would like these others to make for yours; but, most assuredly, this is not the verse which imposes that sacrifice. If you would not that others should do these things on your account, then these things form no part of the "all things whatsoever" you would that men should do unto you; and therefore they form no part of the "all things whatsoever" that you are required, by this verse, to do unto them. The bare circumstance of your positively not wishing that any such services should be rendered unto you, exempts you, as far as the single authority of this precept is concerned, from the obligation of rendering these services to others. This is the limitation to the extent of those services which are called for in the text; and it is surely better, that every limitation to a commandment of God's, should be defined by God himself, than that it should be drawn from the assumptions of human fancy, or from the fears and the feelings of human convenience.

Let a man, in fact, give himself up to a strict and literal observation of the precept in this verse, and it will impress a twofold direction upon him. It will not only guide him to certain performances of good in behalf of others, but it will guide him to the regulation of his own desires of good from them. For his desires of good from others are here set up as the measure of his performances of good to others. The more selfish and unbounded his desires are, the larger are those performances with the obligation of which he is burdened. Whatsoever he would that others should do unto him, he is bound to do unto them; and therefore, the more he gives way to ungenerous and extravagant wishes of service from those who are

around him, the heavier and more insupportable is the load of duty which he brings upon himself. The commandment is quite imperative, and there is no escaping from it; and if he, by the excess of his selfishness, should render it impracticable, then the whole punishment, due to the guilt of casting aside the authority of this commandment, follows in that train of punishment which is annexed to selfishness. There is one way of being relieved from such a burden. There is one way of reducing this verse to a moderate and practicable requirement; and that is, just to give up selfishness—just to stifle all ungenerous desires—just to moderate every wish of service or liberality from others, down to the standard of what is right and equitable; and then there may be other verses in the Bible, by which we are called to be kind even to the evil and the unthankful. But most assuredly this verse lays upon us none other thing than that we should do such services for others as are right and equitable.

The more extravagant, then, a man's wishes of accommodation from others are, the wider is the distance between him and the bidden performances of our text. The separation of him from his duty increases at the rate of two bodies receding from each other by equal and contrary movements. The more selfish his desires of service are from others, the more feeble, on that very account, will be his desires of making any surrender of himself to them, and yet the greater is the amount of that surrender which is due. The poor man, in fact, is moving himself away from the rule; and the rule is just moving as fast away from the man. As he sinks, in the scale of selfishness, beneath the point of a fair and moderate expectation from others, does the rule rise in the scale of duty, with its demands upon him; and thus there is rendered to him double for every unfair and ungenerous imposition that he would make on the kindness of those who are around him.

Now there is one way, and a very effectual one, of getting these two ends to meet. Moderate your own desires of service from others, and you will moderate, in the same degree, all those duties of service to others which are measured by these desires. Have the delicacy to abstain from any wish of encroachment on the convenience or property of another. Have the highmindedness to be indebted for your own support to the exertions of your own honourable industry, rather than to the dastardly habit of preying on the simplicity of those around you. Have such a keen sense of equity, and such a fine tone of independent feeling, that you could not bear to be the cause of hard-

ship or distress to a single human creature, if you could help it. Let the same spirit be in you, which the Apostle wanted to exemplify before the eye of his disciples, when he coveted no man's gold, or silver, or apparel; when he laboured not to be chargeable to any of them; but wrought with his own hands, rather than be burdensome. Let this mind be in you, which was also in the Apostle of the Gentiles; and then, the text before us will not come near you with a single oppressive or impracticable requirement. There may be other passages, where you are called to go beyond the strict line of justice, or common humanity, in behalf of your suffering brethren. But this passage does not touch you with any such preceptive imposition: and you, by moderating your wishes from others down to what is fair and equitable, do, in fact, reduce the rule which binds you to act according to the measure of these wishes, down to a rule of precise and undeviating equity.

The operation is somewhat like that of a governor or fly in mechanism. This is a very happy contrivance, by which all that is defective or excessive in the motion, is confined within the limits of equability; and every tendency, in particular, to any mischievous acceleration is restrained. The impulse given by this verse to the conduct of man among his fellows, would seem, to a superficial observer, to carry him to all the excesses of a most ruinous and quixotic benevolence. But let him only look to the skilful adaptation of the fly. Just suppose the control of moderation and equity to be laid upon his own wishes, and there is not a single impulse given to his conduct beyond the rate of moderation and equity. You are not required here to do all things whatsoever in behalf of others, but to do all things whatsoever for them, that you would should be done unto yourself. This is the check by which the whole of the bidden movement is governed, and kept from running out into any hurtful excess. And such is the beautiful operation of that piece of moral mechanism that we are now employed in contemplating, that while it keeps down all the aspirations of selfishness, it does, in fact, restrain every extravagancy, and impresses on its obedient subjects no other movement than that of an even and inflexible justice.

This rule of our Saviour's, then, prescribes moderation to our desires of good from others, as well as generosity to our doings in behalf of others; and makes the first the measure of obligation to the second. It may thus be seen how easily, in a Chris-

tian society, the whole work of benevolence could be adjusted, so as to render it possible for the givers not only to meet, but also to overpass, the wishes and expectations of the receivers. The rich man may have a heavier obligation laid upon him by other precepts of the New Testament; but by this precept he is not bound to do more for the poor man, than what he himself would wish, in like circumstances, to be done for him. And let the poor man, on the other hand, wish for no more than what a Christian ought to wish for; let him work and endure to the extent of nature's sufferance, rather than beg—and only beg, rather than that he should starve; and in such a state of principle among men, a tide of beneficence would so go forth upon all the vacant places in society, as that there should be no room to receive it. The duty of the rich, as connected with this administration, is of so direct and positive a character, as to obtrude itself at once on the notice of the Christian moralist. But the poor also have a duty in it—to which we feel ourselves directed by the train of argument which we have now been prosecuting—and a duty, too, we think, of far greater importance even than the other, to the best interests of mankind.

For, let us first contrast the rich man who is ungenerous in his doings, with the poor man who is ungenerous in his desires; and see from which of the two it is, that the cause of charity receives the deadlier infliction. There is, it must be admitted, an individual to be met with occasionally, who represents the former of these two characters; with every affection gravitating to self, and to its sordid gratifications and interests; bent on his own pleasure, or his own avarice—and so engrossed with these, as to have no spare feeling at all for the brethren of his common nature; with a heart obstinately shut against that most powerful of applications, the look of genuine and imploring distress—and whose very countenance speaks a surly and determined exclusion on every call that proceeds from it; who, in a tumult of perpetual alarm about new cases, and new tales of suffering, and new plans of philanthropy, has at length learned to resist and to resent every one of them; and, spurning the whole of this disturbance impatiently away, to maintain a firm defensive over the close system of his own selfish luxuries, and his own snug accommodations. Such a man keeps back, it must be allowed, from the cause of charity, what he ought to have rendered to it in his own person. There is a diminution of the philanthropic fund, up to the extent of what benevolence



would have awarded out of his individual means, and individual opportunities. The good cause is a sufferer, not by any positive blow it has sustained, but by the simple negation of one friendly and fostering hand, that else might have been stretched forth to aid and patronize it. There is only so much less of direct countenance and support, than would otherwise have been; for in this our age we have no conception whatever of such an example being at all infectious. For a man to wallow in prosperity himself, and be unmindful of the wretchedness that is around him, is an exhibition of altogether so ungainly a character, that it will far oftener provoke an observer to affront it by the contrast of his own generosity, than to render it the approving testimony of his imitation. So that all we have lost by the man who is ungenerous in his doings, is his own contribution to the cause of philanthropy. And it is a loss that can be borne. The cause of this world's beneficence can do abundantly without him. There is a ground that is yet unbroken, and there are resources which are still unexplored, that will yield a far more substantial produce to the good of humanity, than he, and thousands as wealthy as he, could render to it, out of all their capabilities.

But there is a far wider mischief inflicted on the cause of charity by the poor man who is ungenerous in his desires; by him, whom every act of kindness is sure to call out to the reaction of some new demand, or new expectation; by him, on whom the hand of a giver has the effect, not of appeasing his wants, but of inflaming his rapacity; by him who, trading among the sympathies of the credulous, can dexterously appropriate for himself a portion tenfold greater than what would have blessed and brightened the aspect of many a deserving family. Him we denounce as the worst enemy of the poor. It is he whose ravenous gripe wrests from them a far more abundant benefaction, than is done by the most lordly and unfeeling proprietor in the land. He is the arch-oppressor of his brethren; and the amount of the robbery which he has practised upon them, is not to be estimated by the alms which he has monopolized, by the food, or the raiment, or the money, which he has diverted to himself, from the more modest sufferers around him. He has done what is infinitely worse than turning aside the stream of charity. He has closed its floodgates. He has chilled and alienated the hearts of the wealthy, by the gall of bitterness which he has infused into this whole ministration. A few such harpies would suffice

to exile a whole neighbourhood from the attentions of the benevolent, by the distrust and the jealousy wherewith they have poisoned their bosoms, and laid an arrest on all the sensibilities that else would have flowed from them. It is he who, ever on the watch and on the wing about some enterprise of imposture, makes it his business to work and to prey on the compassionate principles of our nature; it is he who, in effect, grinds the faces of the poor and that, with deadlier severity than even is done by the great baronial tyrant, the battlements of whose castle seem to frown, in all the pride of aristocracy, on the territory that is before it. There is, at all times, a kindness of feeling ready to stream forth, with a tenfold greater liberality than ever, on the humble orders of life; and it is he, and such as he, who have congealed it. He has raised a jaundiced medium between the rich and the poor, in virtue of which, the former eye the latter with suspicion; and there is not a man who wears the garb, and prefers the applications of poverty, that has not suffered from the worthless impostor who has gone before him. They are, in fact, the deceit, and the indolence, and the low sordidness of a few, who have made outcasts of the many, and locked against them the feelings of the wealthy in a kind of iron imprisonment. The rich man who is ungenerous in his doings, keeps back one labourer from the field of charity. But a poor man who is ungenerous in his desires, can expel a thousand labourers in disgust away from it. He sheds a cruel and extended blight over the fair region of philanthropy; and many have abandoned it, who, but for him, would fondly have lingered thereupon; very many, who, but for the way in which their simplicity has been tried and trampled upon, would still have tasted the luxury of doing good unto the poor, and made it their delight, as well as their duty, to expend and expatiate among their habitations.

We say not this to exculpate the rich, for it is their part not to be weary in well-doing, but to prosecute the work and the labour of love under every discouragement. Neither do we say this to the disparagement of the poor; for the picture we have given is of the few out of the many; and the closer the acquaintance with humble life becomes, will it be the more seen of what a high pitch of generosity even the poorest are capable. They, in truth, though perhaps they are not aware of it, can contribute more to the cause of charity, by the moderation of their desires, than the rich can by the generosity of their doings. They,

without, it may be, one penny to bestow, might obtain a place in the record of heaven, as the most liberal benefactors of their species. There is nothing in the humble condition of life they occupy, which precludes them from all that is great or graceful in human charity. There is a way in which they may equal, and even outpeer, the wealthiest of the land, in that very virtue of which wealth alone has been conceived to have the exclusive inheritance. There is a pervading character in humanity which the varieties of rank do not obliterate; and as, in virtue of the common corruption, the poor man may be as effectually the rapacious despoiler of his brethren, as the man of opulence above him—so, there is a common excellence attainable by both; and through which, the poor man may, to the full, be as splendid in generosity as the rich, and yield a far more important contribution to the peace and comfort of society.

To make this plain—it is in virtue of a generous doing on the part of a rich man, when a sum of money is offered for the relief of want; and it is in virtue of a generous desire on the part of a poor man, when this money is refused; when, with the feeling, that his necessities do not just warrant him to be yet a burden upon others, he declines to touch the offered liberality; when, with a delicate recoil from the unlooked-for proposal, he still resolves to put it for the present away, and to find, if possible, for himself a little longer; when, standing on the very margin of dependence, he would yet like to struggle with the difficulties of his situation, and to maintain this severe but honourable conflict, till hard necessity should force him to surrender. Let the money which he has thus so nobly shifted from himself take some new direction to another; and who, we ask, is the giver of it? The first and most obvious reply is, that it is he who owned it; but, it is still more emphatically true, that it is he who has declined it. It came originally out of the rich man's abundance; but it was the noble-hearted generosity of the poor man that handed it onwards to its final destination. He did not emanate the gift; but it is just as much that he has not absorbed it, but left it to find its full conveyance to some neighbour poorer than himself, to some family still more friendless and destitute than his own. It was given the first time out of an overflowing fulness. It is given the second time out of stinted and self-denying penury. In the world's eye, it is the proprietor who bestowed the charity. But, in Heaven's eye, the poor man who waived it away from himself to another is the more illustrious philanthropist of the

two. The one gave it out of his affluence. The other gave it out of the sweat of his brow. He rose up early, and sat up late, that he might have it to bestow on a poorer than himself; and without once stretching forth a giver's hand to the necessities of his brethren, still is it possible, that by him, and such as him, may the main burden of this world's benevolence be borne.

It need scarcely be remarked, that, without supposing the offer of any sum made to a poor man who is generous in his desires, he, by simply keeping himself back from the distributions of charity, fulfils all the high functions which we have now ascribed to him. He leaves the charitable fund untouched for all that distress which is more clamorous than his own; and we, therefore, look not to the original givers of the money, but to those who line, as it were, the margin of pauperism, and yet firmly refuse to enter it—we look upon them as the pre-eminent benefactors of society, who narrow, as it were, by a wall of defence, the ground of human dependence, and are, in fact, the guides and the guardians of all that opulence can bestow.

Thus it is, that when Christianity becomes universal, the doings of the one party, and the desires of the other, will meet and overpass. The poor will wish for no more than the rich will be delighted to bestow; and the rule of our text, which every real Christian at present finds so practicable, will, when carried over the face of society, bind all the members of it into one consenting brotherhood. The duty of doing good to others will then coalesce with that counterpart duty which regulates our desires of good from them; and the work of benevolence will, at length, be prosecuted without that alloy of rapacity on the one hand, and distrust on the other, which serve so much to fester and disturb the whole of this ministration. To complete this adjustment, it is in every way as necessary to lay all the incumbent moralities on those who ask, as on those who confer; and never till the whole text, which comprehends the wishes of man as well as his actions, wield its entire authority over the species, will the disgusts and the prejudices, which form such a barrier between the ranks of human life, be effectually done away. It is not by the abolition of rank, but by assigning to each rank its duties, that peace and friendship and order will at length be firmly established in our world. It is by the force of principle, and not by the force of some great political overthrow, that a consummation so delightful is to be attained. We have no conception whatever, that, even in millennial days, the diversities of wealth

and station will at length be equalized. On looking forward to the time when kings shall be the nursing-fathers, and queens the nursing-mothers of our church, we think that we can behold the perspective of as varied a distribution of place and property as before. In the pilgrimage of life, there will still be the moving procession of the few charioted in splendour on the highway, and the many pacing by their side along the line of the same journey. There will, perhaps, be a somewhat more elevated footpath for the crowd; and there will be an air of greater comfort and sufficiency amongst them; and the respectability of evident worth and goodness will sit upon the countenance of this general population. But, bating these, we look for no great change in the external aspect of society. It will only be a moral and a spiritual change. Kings will retain their sceptres, and nobles their coronets; but, as they float in magnificence along, will they look with benignant feeling on the humble wayfarers; and the honest salutations of regard and reverence will arise to them back again; and, should any weary passenger be ready to sink unfriended on his career, will he, at one time, be borne onwards by his fellows on the pathway, and, at another, will a shower of beneficence be made to descend from the crested equipage that overtakes him. It is Utopianism to think, that, in the ages of our world which are yet to come, the outward distinctions of life will not all be upholden. But it is not Utopianism, it is Prophecy to aver, that the breath of a new spirit will go abroad over the great family of mankind—so that while, to the end of time, there shall be the high and the low in every passing generation, will the charity of kindred feelings, and of a common understanding, create a fellowship between them on their way, till they reach that heaven where human love shall be perfected, and all human greatness is unknown.

In various places of the New Testament, do we see the checks of spirit and delicacy laid upon all extravagant desires. Our text, while it enjoins the performance of good to others, up to the full measure of your desires of good from them, equally enjoins the keeping down of these desires to the measure of your performances. If Christian dispensers had only to do with Christian recipients, the whole work of benevolence would be with ease and harmony carried on. All that was unavoidable—all that came from the hand of Providence—all that was laid upon our suffering brethren by the unlooked-for visitations of accident or disease—all that pain or misfortune which necessarily attaches

to the constitution of the species—all this the text most amply provides for ; and all this a Christian society would be delighted to stretch forth their means for the purpose of alleviating or doing away.

We should not have dwelt so long upon this lesson, were it not for the essential Christian principle that is involved in it. The morality of the gospel is not more strenuous on the side of the duty of giving of this world's goods when it is needed, than it is against the desire of receiving when it is not needed. It is more blessed to give than to receive, and therefore less blessed to receive than to give. For the enforcement of this principle among the poorer brethren, did Paul give up a vast portion of his apostolical time and labour ; and that he might be an example to the flock of working with his own hands, rather than be burdensome, did he set himself down to the occupation of a tent-maker. That lesson is surely worthy of engrossing one sermon of an uninspired teacher, for the sake of which an inspired Apostle of the Gentiles engrossed as much time as would have admitted the preparation and the delivery of many sermons. But there is no more striking indication of the whole spirit and character of the gospel in this matter, than the example of Him who is the author of it—aud of whom we read these affecting words, that He came into the world “not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” It is a righteous thing in him who has of this world's goods, to minister to the necessities of others : but it is a still higher attainment of righteousness in him who has nothing but the daily earnings of his daily work to depend upon, so to manage and to strive that he shall not need to be ministered unto. Christianity overlooks no part of human conduct ; and by providing for this in particular, does it, in fact, overtake, and that with a precept of utmost importance, the habit and condition of a very extended class of human society. And never does the gospel so exhibit its adaptation to our species—and never does virtue stand in such characters of strength and sacredness before us—as when, impregnated with the evangelical spirit, and urged by evangelical motives, it takes its most direct sanction from the life and doings of the Saviour.

And he who feels as he ought, will bear with cheerfulness all that the Saviour prescribes, when he thinks how much it is for him that the Saviour has borne. We speak not of His poverty all the time that He lived upon earth. We speak not of those years when, a houseless wanderer in an unthankful world, He had not

where to lay His head. We speak not of the meek and uncomplaining sufferance with which He met the many ills that oppressed the tenor of His mortal existence. But we speak of that awful burden which crushed and overwhelmed its termination. We speak of that season of the hour and the power of darkness, when it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and to make His soul an offering for sin. To estimate aright the endurance of Him who Himself bore our infirmities, would we ask of any individual to recollect some deep and awful period of abandonment in his own history—when that countenance which at one time beamed and brightened upon Him from above, was mantled in thickest darkness—when the iron of remorse entered into his soul—and, laid on a bed of torture, he was made to behold the evil of sin, and to taste of its bitterness. Let him look back, if he can, on this conflict of many agitations, and then figure the whole of this mental wretchedness to be borne off by the ministers of vengeance into hell, and stretched out unto eternity. And if, on the great day of expiation, a full atonement was rendered, and all that should have fallen upon us was placed upon the head of the sacrifice—let him hence compute the weight and the awfulness of those sorrows which were carried by Him on whom the chastisement of our peace was laid, and who poured out His soul unto the death for us. If ever a sinner, under such a visitation, shall again emerge into peace and joy in believing—if he ever shall again find his way to that fountain which is opened in the house of Judah—if he shall recover once more that sunshine of the soul, which, on the days that are past, disclosed to him the beauties of holiness here, and the glories of heaven hereafter—if ever he shall hear with effect, in this world, that voice from the mercy-seat, which still proclaims a welcome to the chief of sinners, and beckons him afresh to reconciliation—Oh! how gladly then should he bear, throughout the remainder of his days, the whole authority of the Lord who bought him; and bind for ever to his own person that yoke of the Saviour which is easy, and that burden which is light.

## DISCOURSE VI.

## ON THE DISSIPATION OF LARGE CITIES.

\* Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."—EPHES. v. 6.

THERE is one obvious respect in which the standard of morality amongst men, differs from that pure and universal standard which God hath set up for the obedience of His subjects. Men will not demand very urgently of each other, that which does not very nearly, or very immediately, affect their own personal and particular interest. To the violations of justice, or truth, or humanity, they will be abundantly sensitive, because these offer a most visible and quickly felt encroachment on his interest. And thus it is, that the social virtues, even without any direct sanction from God at all, will ever draw a certain portion of respect and reverence around them; and that a loud testimony of abhorrence may often be heard from the mouths of ungodly men, against all such vices as may be classed under the general designation of vices of dishonesty.

Now, the same thing does not hold true of another class of vices, which may be termed the vices of dissipation. These do not touch, in so visible or direct a manner, on the security of what man possesses, and of what man has the greatest value for. But man is a selfish being, and therefore it is, that the ingredient of selfishness gives a keenness to his estimation of the evil and enormity of the former vices, which is scarcely felt at all in any estimation he may form of the latter vices. It is very true, at the same time, that if one were to compute the whole amount of the mischief they bring upon society, it would be found, that the profligacies of mere dissipation go very far to break up the peace and enjoyment, and even the relative virtues of the world; and that, if these profligacies were reformed, it would work a mighty augmentation on the temporal good both of individuals and families. But the connexion between sobriety of character, and the happiness of the community, is not so apparent, because it is more remote than the connexion which obtains between



integrity of character, and the happiness of the community ; and man being not only a selfish but a short-sighted being, it follows, that while the voice of execration may be distinctly heard against every instance of fraud or of injustice, instances of licentiousness may occur on every side of us, and be reported on the one hand with the utmost levity, and be listened to, on the other, with the most entire and complacent toleration.

Here, then, is a point in which the general morality of the world is at utter and irreconcilable variance with the law of God. Here is a case in which the voice that cometh forth from the tribunal of public opinion pronounces one thing, and the voice that cometh forth from the sanctuary of God pronounces another. When there is an agreement between these two voices, the principle on which obedience is rendered to their joint and concurring authority, may be altogether equivocal ; and, with religious and irreligious men, you may observe an equal exhibition of all the equities, and all the civilities of life. But when there is a discrepancy between these two voices—or when the one attaches a criminality to certain habits of conduct, and is not at all seconded by the testimony of the other—then do we escape the confusion of mingled motives, and mingled authorities. The character of the two parties emerges out of the ambiguity which involved it. The law of God points, it must be allowed, as forcible an anathema against the man of dishonesty, as against the man of dissipation. But the chief burden of the world's anathema is laid on the head of the former ; and therefore it is, that, on the latter ground, we meet with more discriminative tests of principle, and gather more satisfying materials for the question of—who is on the side of the Lord of hosts, and who is against Him ?

The passage we have now submitted to you, looks hard on the votaries of dissipation. It is like eternal truth, lifting up its own proclamation, and causing it to be heard amid the errors and the delusions of a thoughtless world. It is like the Deity Himself looking forth, as He did, from a cloud, on the Egyptians of old, and troubling the souls of those who are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. It is like the voice of heaven crying down the voice of human society, and sending forth a note of alarm amongst its giddy generations. It is like the unrolling of a portion of that book of higher jurisprudence, out of which we shall be judged on the day of our coming account, and setting before our eyes an enactment, which, if we disregard

it, will turn that day into the day of our coming condemnation. The words of man are adverted to in this solemn proclamation of God, against all unlawful and all unhallowed enjoyments, and they are called words of vanity. He sets aside the authority of human opinion altogether; and, on an irrevocable record, has He stamped such an assertion of the authority that belongeth to Himself only, as serves to the end of time for an enduring memorial of His will; and as commits the truth of the Lawgiver to the execution of a sentence of wrath against all whose souls are hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. There is, in fact, a peculiar deceitfulness in the matter before us; and, in this verse, are we warned against it—"Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."

In the preceding verse, there is such an enumeration as serves to explain what the things are which are alluded to in the text; and it is such an enumeration, you should remark, as goes to fasten the whole terror, and the whole threat, of the coming vengeance—not on the man who combines in his own person all the characters of iniquity which are specified, but on the man who realizes any one of these characters. It is not, you will observe, the conjunction *and*, but the conjunction *or*, which is interposed between them. It is not as if we said, that the man who is dishonest, and licentious, and covetous, and unfeeling, shall not inherit the kingdom of God—but the man who is either dishonest, or licentious, or covetous, or unfeeling. On the single and exclusive possession of any one of these attributes, will God deal with you as with an enemy. The plea, that we are a little thoughtless, but we have a good heart, is conclusively cut asunder by this portion of the law and of the testimony. And in a corresponding passage, in the ninth verse of the sixth chapter of Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, the same peculiarity is observed in the enumeration of those who shall be excluded from God's favour, and have the burden of God's wrath laid on them through eternity. It is not the man who combines all the deformities of character which are there specified, but the man who realizes any one of the separate deformities. Some of them are the vices of dishonesty, others of them are the vices of dissipation; and, as if aware of a deceitfulness from this cause, he, after telling us that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, bids us not be deceived—for that neither the licentious, nor the abominable,

nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

He who keepeth the whole law, but offendeth in one point, says the Apostle James, is guilty of all. The truth is, that his disobedience on this one point may be more decisive of the state of his loyalty to God, than his keeping of all the rest. It may be the only point on which the character of his loyalty is really brought to the trial. All his conformities to the law of God might have been rendered, because they thwarted not his own inclination; and therefore, would have been rendered though there had been no law at all. The single infraction may have taken place in the only case where there was a real competition between the will of the creature and the will of the Creator; and the event proves to which of the two the right of superiority is awarded. Allegiance to God, in truth, is but one principle, and may be described by one short and summary expression; and one act of disobedience may involve in it such a total surrender of the principle, as goes to dethrone God altogether from the supremacy which belongs to Him. So that the account between a creature and the Creator is not like an account made up of many items, where the expunging of one item would only make one small and fractional deduction from the whole sum of obedience. If you reserve but a single item from this account, and another makes a principle of completing and rendering up the whole of it, then your character varies from his not by a slight shade of difference, but stands contrasted with it in direct and diametric opposition. We perceive that, while with him the will of God has the mastery over all his inclinations, with you there is, at least, one inclination which has the mastery over the will of God; that, while in his bosom there exists a single and subordinating principle of allegiance to the law, in yours there exists another principle, which, on the coming round of a fit opportunity, developes itself in an act of transgression; that, while with him God may be said to walk and to dwell in him, with you there is an evil visitant, who has taken up his abode in your heart, and lodges there either in a state of dormancy or of action, according to circumstances; that, while with him the purpose is honestly proceeded on, of doing nothing which God disapproves, with you there is a purpose not only different, but opposite, of doing something which He disapproves. On this single difference is suspended not a question of degree, but a question of kind.

There are presented to us not two hues of the same colour, but two colours, just as broadly contrasted with each other as light and darkness. And such is the state of the alternative between a partial and an unreserved obedience, that while God imperatively claims the one as His due, He looks on the other as an expression of defiance against Him, and against His sovereignty.

It is the very same in civil government. A man renders himself an outcast by one act of disobedience. He does not need to accumulate upon himself the guilt of all the higher atrocities in crime, ere he forfeits his life to the injured laws of his country. By the perpetration of any one of them is the whole vengeance of the state brought to bear upon his person; and sentence of death is pronounced on a single murder, or forgery, or act of violent depredation.

And let us ask you just to reflect on the tone and spirit of that man towards his God, who would palliate, for example, the the vices of dissipation to which he is addicted, by alleging his utter exemption from the vices of dishonesty, to which he is not addicted. Just think of the real disposition and character of his soul, who can say, "I will please God, but only when, in so doing, I also please myself; or I will do homage to His law, but just in those instances by which I honour the rights, and fulfil the expectations, of society; or I will be decided by His opinion of the right and the wrong, but just when the opinion of my neighbourhood lends its powerful and effective confirmation. But in other cases, when the matter is reduced to a bare question between man and God, when He is the single party I have to do with, when His will and His wrath are the only elements which enter into the deliberation, when judgment, and eternity, and the voice of Him who speaketh from heaven are the only considerations at issue—then do I feel myself at greater liberty, and I shall take my own way, and walk in the counsel of mine own heart, and after the sight of mine own eyes." Oh! be assured, that when all this is laid bare on the day of reckoning, and the discerners of the heart pronounces upon it, and such a sentence is to be given, as will make it manifest to the consciences of all assembled, that true and righteous are the judgments of God—there is many a creditable man who has passed through the world with the plaudits and the testimonies of all his fellows, and without one other flaw upon his reputation but the very slender one of certain harmless foibles, and certain good-humoured peculiarities, who, when

brought to the bar of account, will stand convicted there of having made a divinity of his own will, and spent his days in practical and habitual athéism.

And this argument is not at all affected by the actual state of sinfulness and infirmity into which we have fallen. It is true, even of saints on earth, that they commit sin. But to be overtaken in a fault is one thing; to commit that fault with the deliberate consent of the mind is another. There is in the bosom of every true Christian a strenuous principle of resistance to sin, and it belongs to the very essence of the principle that it is resistance to *all* sin. It admits of no voluntary indulgence to one sin more than to another. Such an indulgence would not only change the character of what may be called the elementary principle of regeneration, but would destroy it altogether. The man who has entered on a course of Christian discipleship, carries on an unsparing and universal war with all iniquity. He has chosen Christ for his alone Master, and he struggles against the ascendancy of every other. It is his sustained and habitual exertion in following after Him to forsake all; so that if his performance were as complete as his endeavour, you would not merely see a conformity to some of the precepts, but a conformity to the whole law of God. At all events, the endeavour is an honest one, and so far successful, that sin has not the dominion; and sure we are that, in such a state of things, the vices of dissipation can have no existence. These vices can be more effectually shunned, and more effectually surmounted, for example, than the infirmities of an unhappy temper. So that, if dissipation still attaches to the character, and appears in the conduct of any individual, we know not a more decisive evidence of the state of that individual as being one of the many who crowd the broad way that leadeth to destruction. We look no further to make out our estimate of his present condition as being that of a rebel, and of his future prospect as being that of spending an eternity in hell. There is no halting between two opinions in this matter. The man who enters a career of dissipation throws down the gauntlet of defiance to his God. The man who persists in this career keeps on the ground of hostility against Him.

Let us now endeavour to trace the origin, the progress, and the effects, of a life of dissipation.

First. Then it may be said of a very great number of young, on their entrance into the business of the world, that they have

not been enough fortified against its seducing influences by their previous education at home. Generally speaking, they come out from the habitation of their parents unarmed and unprepared for the contest which awaits them. If the spirit of this world's morality reign in their own family, then it cannot be, that their introduction into a more public scene of life will be very strictly guarded against those vices on which the world placidly smiles, or at least regards with silent toleration. They may have been told, in early boyhood, of the infamy of a lie. They may have had the virtues of punctuality, and of economy, and of regular attention to business, pressed upon their observation. They may have heard a uniform testimony on the side of good behaviour, up to the standard of such current moralities as obtain in their neighbourhood; and this, we are ready to admit, may include in it a testimony against all such excesses of dissipation as would unfit them for the prosecution of this world's interests. But let us ask, whether there are not parents, who, after they have carried the work of discipline thus far, forbear to carry it any farther; who, while they would mourn over it as a family trial should any son of theirs fall a victim to excessive dissipation, yet are willing to tolerate the lesser degrees of it; who, instead of deciding the question on the alternative of his heaven or his hell, are satisfied with such a measure of sobriety as will save him from ruin and disgrace in this life; who, if they can only secure this, have no great objection to the moderate share he may take in this world's conformities; who feel, that in this matter there is a necessity and a power of example against which it is vain to struggle, and which must be acquiesced in; who deceive themselves with the fancied impossibility of stopping the evil in question—and say, that business must be gone through, and that, in the prosecution of it, exposures must be made; and that, for the success of it, a certain degree of accommodation to others must be observed; and seeing that it is so mighty an object for one to widen the extent of his connexions, he must neither be very retired nor very peculiar—nor must his hours of companionship be too jealously watched or inquired into—nor must we take him too strictly to task about engagements, and acquaintances, and expenditure—nor must we forget, that while sobriety has its time and its season in one period of life, indulgence has its season in another; and we may fetch from the recollected follies of our own youth, a lesson of connivance for the present occasion; and altogether there is no help for it;

and it appears to us, that absolutely and totally to secure him from ever entering upon scenes of dissipation, you must absolutely and totally withdraw him from the world, and surrender all his prospects of advancement, and give up the object of such a provision for our families as we feel to be a first and most important concern with us.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,” says the Bible, “and all other things shall be added unto you.” This is the promise which the faith of a Christian parent will rest upon; and in the face of every hazard to the worldly interests of his offspring, will he bring them up in the strict nurture and admonition of the Lord; and he will loudly protest against iniquity, in all its degrees, and in all its modifications; and while the power of discipline remains with him, will it ever be exerted on the side of pure, faultless, undeviating obedience; and he will tolerate no exception whatever; and he will brave all that looks formidable in singularity, and all that looks menacing in separation from the custom and countenance of the world; and feeling that his main concern is to secure for himself and for his family a place in the city which hath foundations, will he spurn all the maxims, and all the plausibilities, of a contagious neighbourhood away from him. He knows the price of his Christianity, and it is that he must break off conformity with the world—nor for any paltry advantage which it has to offer, will he compromise the eternity of his children. And let us tell the parents of another spirit, and another principle, that they are as good as incurring the guilt of a human sacrifice; that they are offering up their children at the shrine of an idol; that they are parties in provoking the wrath of God against them here; and on the day when that wrath is to be revealed, shall they hear not only the moanings of their despair, but the outcries of their bitterest execration. On that day, the glance of reproach from their own neglected offspring will throw a deeper shade of wretchedness over the dark and boundless futurity that lies before them. And if, at the time when prophets rung the tidings of God’s displeasure against the people of Israel, it was denounced as the foulest of all their abominations that they caused their children to pass through the fire unto Moloch—know, ye parents, who, in placing your children on some road to gainful employment, have placed them without a sigh in the midst of depravity, so near and so surrounding, that, without a miracle, they must perish, you have done an act of idolatry to

the god of this world; you have commanded your household after you to worship him as the great divinity of their lives; and you have caused your children to make their approaches unto his presence—and, in so doing, to pass through the fire of such temptations as have destroyed them.

We do not wish to offer you an overcharged picture on this melancholy subject. What we now say is not applicable to all. Even in the most corrupt and crowded of our cities, parents are to be found, who nobly dare the surrender of every vain and flattering illusion rather than surrender the Christianity of their children. And what is still more affecting, over the face of the country do we meet with such parents, who look on this world as a passage to another, and on all the members of their household as fellow-travellers to eternity along with them; and who, in this true spirit of believers, feel the salvation of their children to be indeed the burden of their best and their dearest interest; and who, by prayer, and precept, and example, have strenuously laboured with their souls, from the earliest light of their understanding; and have taught them to tremble at the way of evil-doers, and to have no fellowship with those who keep not the commandments of God—nor is there a day more sorrowful in the annals of this pious family, than when the course of time has brought them onwards to the departure of their eldest boy—and he must bid adieu to his native home, with all the peace, and all the simplicity which abound in it—and as he eyes in fancy the distant town whither he is going, does he shrink as from the thought of an unknown wilderness—and it is his firm purpose to keep aloof from the dangers and the profligacies which deform it—and, should sinners offer to entice him, not to consent, and never, never, to forget the lessons of a father's vigilance, the tenderness of a mother's prayers.

Let us now, in the next place, pass from that state of things which obtains among the young at their outset into the world, and take a look of that state of things which obtains after they have got fairly introduced into it—when the children of the ungodly, and the children of the religious, meet on one common arena—when business associates them together in one chamber, and the omnipotence of custom lays it upon them all to meet together at periodic intervals, and join in the same parties, and the same entertainments—when the yearly importation of youths from the country falls in with that assimilating mass of corruption which has got so firm and so rooted an establishment in



the town—when the frail and unsheltered delicacies of the timid boy have to stand a rude and a boisterous contest with the hardier depravity of those who have gone before him—when ridicule, and example, and the vain words of a delusive sophistry, which palliates in his hearing the enormity of vice, are all brought to bear upon his scruples, and to stifle the remorse he might feel when he casts his principle and his purity away from him—when, placed as he is in a land of strangers, he finds that the tenure of acquaintanceship with nearly all around him, is that he render himself up in a conformity to their doings—when a voice, like the voice of protecting friendship, bids him to the feast ; and a welcome, like the welcome of honest kindness, hails his accession to the society ; and a spirit, like the spirit of exhilarating joy, animates the whole scene of hospitality before him ; and hours of rapture roll successively away on the wings of merriment and jocularly and song ; and after the homage of many libations has been rendered to honour and fellowship and patriotism, impurity is at length proclaimed in full and open cry, as one presiding divinity, at the board of their social entertainment.

And now it remains to compute the general result of a process, which we assert of the vast majority of our young on their way to manhood, that they have to undergo. The result is, that the vast majority are initiated into all the practices, and describe the full career of dissipation. Those who have imbibed from their fathers the spirit of this world's morality, are not sensibly arrested in this career, either by the opposition of their own friends, or by the voice of their own conscience. Those who have imbibed an opposite spirit, and have brought it into competition with an evil world, and have at length yielded, have done so, we may well suppose, with many a sigh and many a struggle, and many a look of remembrance on those former years when they were taught to lisp the prayer of infancy, and were trained in a mansion of piety to a reverence for God, and for all His ways ; and even still will a parent's parting advice haunt his memory, and a letter from the good old man revive the sensibilities which at one time guarded and adorned him ; and at times will the transient gleam of remorse lighten up its agony within him ; and when he contrasts the profaneness and depravity of his present companions with the sacredness of all he ever heard or saw in his father's dwelling, it will almost feel as if conscience were again to resume her power,

and the revisiting Spirit of God to call him back again from the paths of wickedness ; and on his restless bed will the images of guilt conspire to disturb him, and the terrors of punishment offer to scare him away ; and many will be the dreary and dissatisfied intervals when he shall be forced to acknowledge that, in bartering his soul for the pleasures of sin, he has bartered the peace and enjoyment of the world along with it. But, alas ! the entanglements of companionship have got hold of him ; and the inveteracy of habit tyrannizes over all his purposes ; and the stated opportunity again comes round ; and the loud laugh of his partners in guilt chases, for another season, all his despondency away from him ; and the infatuation gathers upon him every month ; and a hardening process goes on within his heart ; and the deceitfulness of sin grows apace ; and he at length becomes one of the sturdiest and most unrelenting of her votaries ; and he, in his turn, strengthens the conspiracy that is formed against the morals of a new generation ; and all the ingenuous delicacies of other days are obliterated ; and he contracts a temperament of knowing, hackneyed, unfeeling depravity : and thus the mischief is transmitted from one year to another, and keeps up the guilty history of every place of crowded population.

And let us here speak one word to those seniors in depravity—those men who give to the corruption of acquaintances, who are younger than themselves, their countenance and their agency ; who can initiate them without a sigh in the mysteries of guilt, and care not though a parent's hope should wither and expire under the contagion of their ruffian example. It is only upon their own conversion that we can speak to them the pardon of the gospel. It is only if they themselves are washed, and sanctified, and justified, that we can warrant their personal deliverance from the wrath that is to come. But under all the concealment which rests on the futurities of God's administration, we know that there are degrees of suffering in hell—and that, while some are beaten with few stripes, others are beaten with many. And surely, if they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever, we may be well assured, that they who patronize the cause of iniquity—they who can beckon others to that way which leadeth on to the chambers of death—they who can aid and witness, without a sigh, the extinction of youthful modesty—surely it may well be said of such, that on them a darker frown will fall from the judg-

ment-seat, and through eternity will they have to bear the pains of a fiercer indignation.

Having thus looked to the commencement of a course of dissipation, and to its progress, let us now, in the third place, look to its usual termination. We speak not at present of the coming death and of the coming judgment, but of the change which takes place on many a votary of licentiousness, when he becomes what the world calls a reformed man; and puts on the decencies of a sober and domestic establishment; and bids adieu to the pursuits and the profligacies of youth, not because he has repented of them, but because he has outlived them. You all perceive how this may be done without one movement of the heart, or of the understanding, towards God—that it is done by many, though duty to Him be not in all their thoughts—that the change, in this case, is not from the idol of pleasure unto God, but only from one idol to another—and that, after the whole of this boasted transformation, we may still behold the same body of sin and of death, and only a new complexion thrown over it. There may be the putting on of sobriety, but there is no putting on of godliness. It is a common and an easy transition to pass from one kind of disobedience to another, but it is not so easy to give up that rebelliousness of the heart which lies at the root of all disobedience. It may be easy, after the wonted course of dissipation is ended, to hold out another aspect altogether in the eye of acquaintances; but it is not so easy to recover that shock, and that overthrow, which the religious principle sustains, when a man first enters the world, and surrenders himself to the power of its enticements. “Such were some of you,” says the Apostle, “but ye are washed, and sanctified, and justified.” Our reformed man knows not the meaning of such a process; and, most assuredly, has not at all realized it in the history of his own person. We will not say what new object he is running after. It may be wealth, or ambition, or philosophy; but it is nothing connected with the interest of his soul. It bears no reference whatever to the concerns of that great relationship which obtains between the creature and the Creator. The man has withdrawn, and perhaps for ever, from the scenes of dissipation, and has betaken himself to another way—but still it is his own way. It is not the will or the way of God that he is yet caring for. Such a man may bid adieu to profligacy in his own person; but he lifts up the light of his countenance on the profligacy of others—he gives it the whole weight and authority

of his connivance. He wields, we will say it, such an instrumentality of seduction over the young, as, though not so alarming, is far more dangerous than the undisguised attempts of those who are the immediate agents of corruption. The formal and deliberate conspiracy of those who club together, at stated terms of companionship, may be all seen, and watched, and guarded against. But how shall we pursue this conspiracy into its other ramifications? How shall we be able to neutralize that insinuating poison which distils from the lips of grave and respectable citizens? How shall we be able to dissipate that gloss which is thrown by the smile of elders and superiors over the sins of forbidden indulgence? How can we disarm the bewitching sophistry which lies in all these evident tokens of complacency, on the part of advanced and reputable men? How is it possible to track the progress of this sore evil, throughout all the business and intercourse of society? How can we stem the influence of evil communications, when the friend, and the patron, and the man who has cheered and signalized us by his polite invitations, turns his own family-table into a nursery of licentiousness? How can we but despair of ever witnessing on earth a pure and a holy generation, when even parents will utter their polluting levities in the hearing of their own children; and vice and humour and gaiety are all indiscriminately blended into one conversation; and a loud laugh, from the initiated and the uninitiated in profligacy, is ever ready to flatter and to regale the man who can thus prostitute his powers of entertainment? Oh! for an arm of strength to demolish this firm and far-spread compact of iniquity; and for the power of some such piercing and prophetic voice, as might convince our reformed men of the baleful influence they cast behind them on the morals of the succeeding generation!

We, at the same time, have our eye perfectly open to that great external improvement which has taken place of late years in the manners of society. There is not the same grossness of conversation. There is not the same impatience for the withdrawal of him who, asked to grace the outset of an assembled party, is compelled, at a certain step in the process of conviviality, by the obligations of professional decency, to retire from it. There is not so frequent an exaction of this as one of the established proprieties of social or of fashionable life. And if such an exaction was ever laid by the omnipotence of custom on a minister of Christianity, it is such an exaction as ought

never, never to be complied with. It is not for him to lend the sanction of his presence to a meeting with which he could not sit to its final termination. It is not for him to stand associated, for a single hour, with an assemblage of men who begin with hypocrisy, and end with downright blackguardism. It is not for him to watch the progress of the coming ribaldry, and to hit the well-selected moment when talk and turbulence and boisterous merriment are on the eve of bursting forth upon the company, and carrying them forward to the full acme and uproar of their enjoyment. It is quite in vain to say, that he has only sanctified one part of such an entertainment. He has as good as given his connivance to the whole of it, and left behind him a discharge in full of all its abominations; and therefore, be they who they may, whether they rank among the proudest aristocracy of our land, or are charioted in splendour along, as the wealthiest of the citizens, it is his part to keep as purely and indignantly aloof from such society as this, as he would from the vilest and most debasing associations of profligacy.

And now the important question comes to be put: what is the likeliest way of setting up a barrier against this desolating torrent of corruption, into which there enter so many elements of power and strength, that, to the general eye, it looks altogether irresistible? It is easier to give a negative than an affirmative answer to this question. And therefore, it shall be our first remark, that the mischief never will be effectually combated by any expedient separate from the growth and the transmission of personal Christianity throughout the land. If no addition be made to the stock of religious principle in a country, then the profligacy of a country will make its obstinate stand against all the mechanism of the most skilful, and plausible, and well-looking contrivances. It must not be disguised from you, that it does not lie within the compass either of prisons or penitentiaries to work any sensible abatement on the wickedness of our existing generation. The operation must be of a preventive rather than of a corrective tendency. It must be brought to bear upon boyhood; and be kept up through that whole period of random exposures through which it has to run, on its way to an established condition in society; and a high tone of moral purity must be infused into the bosom of many individuals; and their agency will effect, through the channels of family and social connexion, what never can be effected by any framework of artificial regulations, so long as the spirit and

character of society remain what they are. In other words, the progress of reformation will never be sensibly carried forward beyond the progress of personal Christianity in the world; and therefore, the question resolves itself into the likeliest method of adding to the number of Christian parents who may fortify the principles of their children at their first outset in life—of adding to the number of Christian young men, who might nobly dare to be singular, and to perform the angelic office of guardians and advisers to those who are younger than themselves—of adding to the number of Christians in middle and advanced life, who might, as far as in them lies, alter the general feeling and countenance of society; and blunt the force of that tacit but most seductive testimony, which has done so much to throw a palliative veil over the guilt of a life of dissipation.

Such a question cannot be entered upon at present in all its bearings, and in all its generality. And we must, therefore, simply satisfy ourselves with the object, that as we have attempted already to reproach the indifference of parents, and to reproach the unfeeling depravity of those young men who scatter their pestilential levities around the whole circle of their companionship, we may now shortly attempt to lay upon the men of middle and advanced life, in general society, their share of responsibility for the morals of the rising generation. For the promotion of this great cause, it is not at all necessary to school them into any nice or exquisite contrivances. Could we only give them a desire towards it, and a sense of obligation, they would soon find their own way to the right exercise of their own influence in forwarding the interests of purity and virtue among the young. Could we only affect their consciences on this point, there would be almost no necessity whatever to guide or enlighten their understanding. Could we only get them to be Christians, and to carry their Christianity into their business, they would then feel themselves invested with a guardianship; and that time, and pains, and attention, ought to be given to the fulfilment of its concerns. It is quite in vain to ask, as if there was any mystery, or any helplessness about it, "What can they do?" For, is it not a fact most palpably obvious, that much can be done even by the mere power of example? Or might not the master of any trading establishment send the pervading influence of his own principles among some, at least, of the servants and auxiliaries who belong to it? Or can he, in no degree whatever, so select those who are admitted, as to ward

off much contamination from the branches of his employ? Or might not he so deal out his encouragement to the deserving, as to confirm them in all their purposes of sobriety? Or might not he interpose the shield of his countenance and his testimony between a struggling youth and the ridicule of his acquaintances? Or, by the friendly conversation of half an hour, might not he strengthen within him every principle of virtuous resistance? By these, and by a thousand other expedients, which will readily suggest themselves to him who has the good-will, might not a healing water be sent forth through the most corrupted of all our establishments; and it be made safe for the unguarded young to officiate in its chambers; and it be made possible to enter upon the business of the world without entering on such a scene of temptation, as to render almost inevitable the vice of the world, and its impiety, and its final and everlasting condemnation? Would Christians only be open and intrepid, and carry their religion into their merchandise; and furnish us with a single hundred of such houses in this city, where the care and character of the master formed a guarantee for the sobriety of all his dependants, it would be like the clearing out of a piece of cultivated ground in the midst of a frightful wilderness; and parents would know whither they could repair with confidence for the settlement of their offspring; and we should behold, what is mightily to be desired, a line of broad and visible demarcation between the Church and the world; and an interest so precious as the immortality of children, would no longer be left to the play of such fortuitous elements, as operated at random throughout the confused mass of a mingled and indiscriminate society. And thus, the pieties of a father's house might bear to be transplanted even into the scenes of ordinary business; and instead of withering, as they do at present, under a contagion which spreads in every direction, and fills up the whole face of the community, they might flourish in that moral region which was occupied by a peculiar people, and which they had reclaimed from a world that lieth in wickedness.

## DISCOURSE VII.

ON THE VITIATING INFLUENCE OF THE HIGHER UPON THE LOWER  
ORDERS OF SOCIETY.

“Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but wo unto him through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.”—LUKE xvii. 1, 2.

To offend another, according to the common acceptation of the words, is to displease him. Now, this is not its acceptation in the verse before us, nor in several other verses of the New Testament. It were coming nearer to the scriptural meaning of the term, had we, instead of ‘offence’ and ‘offending,’ adopted the terms ‘scandal’ and ‘scandalizing.’ But the full signification of the phrase ‘to offend another,’ is to cause him to fall from the faith and obedience of the gospel. It may be such a falling away as that a man recovers himself—like the disciples, who were all offended in Christ, and forsook Him; and, after a season of separation, were at length re-established in their discipleship. Or it may be such a falling away as that there is no recovery—like those in the Gospel of John, who, offended by the sayings of our Saviour, went back, and walked no more with Him. If you put such a stumblingblock in the way of a neighbour, who is walking on a course of Christian discipleship, as to make him fall, you offend him. It is in this sense that our Saviour uses the word, when He speaks of your own right hand, or your own right eye, offending you. They may do so, by giving you an occasion to fall. And what is here translated ‘offend,’ is, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, translated ‘to make to offend;’ where Paul says, “If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no more flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”

The little ones to whom our Saviour alludes, in this passage, He elsewhere more fully particularizes, by telling us that they are those who believe in Him. There is no call here for entering into any controversy about the doctrine of perseverance. It



is not necessary, either for the purpose of explaining, or of giving force to the practical lesson of the text now submitted to you. We happen to be as much satisfied with the doctrine, that he who hath a real faith in the gospel of Christ will never fall away, as we are satisfied with the truth of any identical proposition. If a professing disciple do, in fact, fall away, this is a phenomenon which might be traced to an essential defect of principle at the first; which proves, in fact, that he made the mistake of one principle for another; and that, while he thought he had the faith, it was not that very faith of the New Testament which is unto salvation. There might have been the semblance of a work of grace, without its reality. Such a work, if genuinely begun, will be carried onwards even unto perfection. But this is a point on which it is not at all necessary, at present, for us to dogmatize. We are led, by the text, to expatiate on the guilt of that one man who has wrecked the interest of another man's eternity. Now, it may be very true, that if the second has actually entered within the strait gate, it is not in the power of the first, with all his artifices, and all his temptations, to draw him out again. But instead of having entered the gate, he may only be on the road that leads to it; and it is enough, amid the uncertainties which, in this life, hang over the question of—who are really believers, and who are not? that it is not known in which of these two conditions the little one is; and that, therefore, to seduce him from obedience to the will of Christ, may, in fact, be to arrest his progress towards Christ, and to draw him back unto the perdition of his soul. The whole guilt of the text may be realized by him who keeps back another from the church, where he might have heard, and heard with acceptance, the word of life which he has not yet accepted; or by him, whose influence or whose example detains, in the entanglement of any one sin, the acquaintance who is meditating an outset on the path of decided Christianity—seeing that every such outset will land in disappointment those who, in the act of following after Christ, do not forsake all; or by him who tampers with the conscience of an apparently zealous and confirmed disciple, so as to seduce him into some habitual sin, either of neglect or of performance—seeing that the individual who, but for this seduction, might have cleaved fully unto the Lord, and turned out a prosperous and decided Christian, has been led to put a good conscience away from him—and so, by making shipwreck of his faith, has proved to the world, that it was not the faith which

could obtain the victory. It is true, that it is not possible to seduce the elect. But even this suggestion, perverse and unjust as it would be in its application, is not generally present to the mind of him who is guilty of the attempt to seduce, or of the act which carries a seducing influence along with it. The guilt with which he is chargeable, is that of an indifference to the spiritual and everlasting fate of others. He is wilfully the occasion of causing those who are the little ones, or, for anything he knows, might have been the little ones of Christ, to fall; and it is against him that our Saviour, in the text, lifts not a cool but an impassioned testimony. It is of him that He utters one of the most severe and solemn denunciations of the gospel.

If this text were thoroughly pursued into its manifold applications, it would be found to lay a weight of fearful responsibility upon us all. We are here called upon, not to work out our own salvation, but to compute the reflex influence of all our works, and of all our ways, on the principles of others. And when one thinks of the mischief which this influence might spread around it, even from Christians of chiefest reputation; when one thinks of the readiness of man to take shelter in the example of an acknowledged superior; when one thinks that some inconsistency of ours might seduce another into such an imitation as overbears the reproaches of his own conscience, and as, by vitiating the singleness of his eye, makes the whole of his body, instead of being full of light, to be full of darkness; when one takes the lesson along with him into the various conditions of life he may be called by Providence to occupy, and thinks, that if, either as a parent surrounded by his family, or as a master by the members of his establishment, or as a citizen by the many observers of his neighbourhood around him, he shall either speak such words, or do such actions, or administer his affairs in such a way as is unworthy of his high and immortal destination, that then a taint of corruption is sure to descend from such an exhibition, upon the immortals who are on every side of him; when one thinks of himself as the source and the centre of a contagion which might bring a blight upon the graces and the prospects of other souls besides his own—surely this is enough to supply him with a reason why, in working out his own personal salvation, he should do it with fear, and with watchfulness, and with much trembling.

But we are now upon the ground of a higher and more deli-

cate conscientiousness than is generally to be met with ; whereas our object at present is to expose certain of the grosser offences which abound in society, and which spread a most dangerous and insnaring influence among the individuals who compose it. To this we have been insensibly led, by the topics of that discourse which we addressed to you on a former occasion ; and when it fell in our way to animadvert on the magnitude of that man's guilt, who, either by his example, or his connivance, or his direct and formal tuition, can speed the entrance of the yet unpractised young on a career of dissipation. And whether he be a parent, who, trenched in this world's maxims, can, without a struggle, and without a sigh, leave his helpless offspring to take their random and unprotected way through this world's conformities ; or whether he be one of those seniors in depravity, who can cheer on his more youthful companion to a surrender of all those scruples, and all those delicacies, which have hitherto adorned him ; or whether he be a more aged citizen, who, having run the wonted course of intemperance, can cast an approving eye on the corruption throughout all its stages, and give a tenfold force to all its allurements by setting up the authority of grave and reformed manhood upon its side ; in each of these characters do we see an offence that is pregnant with deadliest mischief to the principles of the rising generation ; and while we are told by our text, that, for such offences, there exists some deep and mysterious necessity—insomuch, that it is impossible but that offences must come—yet, let us not forget to urge on every one sharer in this work of moral contamination, that never does the meek and gentle Saviour speak in terms more threatening or more reproachful, than when he speaks of the enormity of such misconduct. There cannot, in truth, be a grosser outrage committed on the order of God's administration, than that which he is in the habit of inflicting. There cannot, surely, be a directer act of rebellion, than that which multiplies the adherents of its own cause, and which swells the hosts of the rebellious. There cannot be made to rest a feller condemnation on the head of iniquity, than that which is sealed by the blood of its own victims and its own proselytes. Nor should we wonder when that is said of such an agent for iniquity which is said of the betrayer of our Lord : “It were better for him that he had not been born.” It were better for him, now that he is born, could he be committed back again to deep annihilation. Rather than that he should offend one of these little ones, it were better

for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

This is one case of such offences as are adverted to in the text. Another and still more specific is beginning, we understand, to be exemplified in our own city, though it has not attained to the height or to the frequency at which it occurs in a neighbouring metropolis. We allude to the doing of week-day business upon the sabbath. We allude to that violence which is rudely offered to the feelings and the associations of sacredness, by those exactions that an ungodly master lays at times on his youthful dependants—when those hours which they wont to spend in church, they are called upon to spend in the counting-house—when that day, which ought to be a day of piety, is turned into a day of posting and of penmanship—when the rules of the decalogue are set aside, and utterly superseded by the rules of the great trading establishment; and everything is made to give way to the hurrying emergency of orders, and clearances, and the demands of instant correspondence. Such is the magnitude of this stumblingblock, that many is the young man who has here fallen to rise no more—that, at this point of departure, he has so widened his distance from God, as never, in fact, to return to Him—that, in this distressing contest between principle and necessity, the final blow has been given to his religious principles—that the master whom he serves, and under whom he earns his provision for time, has here wrested the whole interest of his eternity away from him—that, from this moment, there gathers upon his soul the complexion of a hardier and more determined impiety—and conscience once stifled now speaks to him with a feebler voice—and the world obtains a firmer lodgement in his heart—and, renouncing all his original tenderness about Sabbath, and Sabbath employments, he can now, with the thorough unconcern of a fixed and familiarized proselyte, keep equal pace by his fellows throughout every scene of profanation—and he who wont to tremble and recoil from the freedoms of irreligion with the sensibility of a little one, may soon become the most daringly rebellious of them all—and that Sabbath which he has now learned, at one time, to give to business, he, at another, gives to unhallowed enjoyments, and it is turned into a day of visits and excursions, given up to pleasure, and enlivened by all the mirth and extravagance of holiday—and, when sacrament is proclaimed from the city pulpits, he, the apt, the well-trained disciple of his corrupt and corrupting superior,

is the readiest to plan the amusements of the coming opportunity, and among the very foremost in the ranks of emigration—and though he may look back, at times, to the Sabbath of his father's pious house, yet the retrospect is always becoming dimmer, and at length it ceases to disturb him—and thus the alienation widens every year, till, wholly given over to impiety, he lives without God in the world.

And were we asked to state the dimensions of that iniquity which stalks regardlessly and at large over the ruin of youthful principles—were we asked to find a place in the catalogue of guilt for a crime the atrocity of which is only equalled, we understand, by its frequency—were we called to characterize the man who, so far from attempting one counteracting influence against the profligacy of his dependants, issues, from the chair of authority on which he sits, a commandment, in the direct face of a commandment from God—the man who has chartered impiety in articles of agreement, and has vested himself with a property in that time which only belongs to the Lord of the Sabbath—were we asked to look to the man who could thus overbear the last remnants of remorse in a struggling and unpractised bosom, and glitter in all the ensigns of a prosperity that is reared on the violated consciences of those who are beneath him—Oh! were the question put, To whom shall we liken such a man? or what is the likeness to which we can compare him? we would say, that the guilt of him who trafficked on the highway, or trafficked on that outraged coast, from whose weeping families children were irrecoverably torn, was far outmeasured by the guilt which could thus frustrate a father's fondest prayers, and trample under foot the hopes and the preparations of eternity.

There is another way whereby, in the employ of a careless and unprincipled master, it is impossible but that offences must come. You know just as well as we do, that there are chicaneries in business; and, so long as we forbear stating the precise extent of them, there is not an individual among you, who has a title to construe the assertion into an affronting charge of criminality against himself. But you surely know, as well as we, that the mercantile profession, conducted, as it often is, with the purest integrity, and laying no resistless necessity whatever for the surrender of principle on any of its members; and dignified by some of the noblest exhibitions of untainted honour, and devoted friendship, and magnificent

generosity, that have ever been recorded of our nature;—you know as well as we, that it was utterly extravagant, and in the face of all observation, to affirm, that each and every one of its numerous competitors, stood clearly and totally exempted from the sins of an undue selfishness. And accordingly, there are certain commodious falsehoods occasionally practised in this department of human affairs. There are, for example, certain dexterous and gainful evasions, whereby the payers of tribute are enabled, at times, to make their escape from the eagle eye of the exactors of tribute. There are even certain contests of ingenuity between individual traders, where, in the higgling of a very keen and anxious negotiation, each of them is tempted in talking of offers and prices, and the reports of fluctuations in home and foreign markets, to say the things which are not. You must assuredly know that these, and such as these, have introduced a certain quantity of what may be called shuffling, into the communications of the trading world—insomuch that the simplicity of yea yea, and nay nay, is in some degree exploded; and there is a kind of understood toleration established for certain modes of expression, which could not, we are much afraid, stand the rigid scrutiny of the great day; and there is an abatement of confidence between man and man, implying, we doubt, such a proportionate abatement of truth, as goes to extend most fearfully the condemnation that is due to all liars, who shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. And who can compute the effect of all this on the young and yet unpractised observer? Who does not see, that it must go to reduce the tone of his principles; and to involve him in many a delicate struggle between the morality he has learned from his catechism, and the morality he sees in the counting-house; and to obliterate, in his mind, the distinctions between right and wrong; and at length, to reconcile his conscience to a sin which, like every other, deserves the wrath and curse of God; and to make him tamper with a direct commandment, in such a way, as that falsehoods and frauds might be nothing more in his estimation, than the peccadilloes of an innocent compliance with the current practices and moralities of the world? Here, then, is a point at which the way of those who conform to this world diverges from the way of those peculiar people who are redeemed from all iniquity, and are thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Here is a grievous occasion to fall. Here is a competition between the service of

God and the service of Mammon. Here is the exhibition of another offence, and the bringing forward of another temptation, to those who are entering on the business of the world, little adverted to, we fear, by those who live in utter carelessness of their own souls, and never spend a thought or a sigh about the immortality of others—but most distinctly singled out by the text as a crime of foremost magnitude in the eye of Him who judgeth righteously.

And before we quit the subject of such offences as take place in ordinary trade, let us just advert to one example of it—not so much for the frequency of its occurrence, as for the way that it stands connected in principle with a very general, and, we believe, a very mischievous offence, that takes place in domestic society. It is neither, you will observe, the avarice nor the selfishness of our nature, which forms the only obstruction in the way of one man dealing plainly with another. There is another obstruction, founded on a far more pleasing and amiable principle—even on that delicacy of feeling in virtue of which one man cannot bear to wound or to mortify another. It would require, for instance, a very rare, and certainly not a very enviable degree of hardihood, to tell another without pain, that you did not think him worthy of being trusted. And yet, in the doings of merchandise, this is the very trial of delicacy which sometimes offers itself. The man with whom you stand committed to as great an extent as you count to be advisable, would like perhaps to try your confidence in him, and his own credit with you, a little farther; and he comes back upon you with a fresh order; and you secretly have no desire to link any more of your property with his speculation; and the difficulty is how to get the application in question disposed of; and you feel that by far the pleasantest way, to all the parties concerned, would be to make him believe that you refuse the application not because you will not comply, but because you cannot—for that you have no more of the article he wants from you upon hand. And it would only be putting your own soul to hazard, did you personally and by yourself make this communication: but you select perhaps as the organ of it some agent or underling of your establishment, who knows it to be false; and to avoid the soreness of a personal encounter with the man whom you are to disappoint, you devolve the whole business of this lying apology upon others; and thus do you continue to shift this oppressive burden away from you—or, in other words, to save your own

delicacy, you count not, and you care not, about another's damnation.

Now, what we call upon you to mark is the perfect identity of principle between this case of making a brother to offend, and another case which obtains, we have heard, to a very great extent among the most genteel and opulent of our city families. In this case, you put a lie into the mouth of a dependant, and that for the purpose of protecting your substance from such an application as might expose it to hazard or diminution. In the second case, you put a lie into the mouth of a dependant, and that for the purpose of protecting your time from such an encroachment as you would not feel to be convenient or agreeable. And in both cases you are led to hold out this offence by a certain delicacy of temperament, in virtue of which, you can neither give a man plainly to understand that you are not willing to trust him, nor can you give him to understand that you count his company to be an interruption. But in both the one and the other example, look to the little account that is made of a brother's or of a sister's eternity; behold the guilty task that is thus unmercifully laid upon one who is shortly to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; think of the entanglement which is thus made to beset the path of a creature who is unperishable. That, at the shrine of Mammon, such a bloody sacrifice should be rendered by some of his unrelenting votaries, is not to be wondered at; but that the shrine of elegance and fashion should be bathed in blood—that soft and sentimental ladyship should put forth her hand to such an enormity—that she who can sigh so gently, and shed her graceful tear over the sufferings of others, should thus be accessory to the second and more awful death of her own domestics—that one who looks the mildest and the loveliest of human beings, should exact obedience to a mandate which carries wrath, and tribulation, and anguish, in its train—Oh! how it should confirm every Christian in his defiance to the authority of fashion, and lead him to spurn at all its folly, and at all its worthlessness.

And it is quite in vain to say, that the servant whom you thus employ as the deputy of your falsehood, can possibly execute the commission without the conscience being at all tainted or defiled by it; that a simple cottage maid can so sophisticate the matter, as, without any violence to her original principles, to utter the language of what she assuredly knows to be a downright lie; that she, humble and untutored soul, can sustain no



injury when thus made to tamper with the plain English of these realms; that she can at all satisfy herself, how, by the prescribed utterance of "not at home," she is not pronouncing such words as are substantially untrue, but merely using them in another and perfectly understood meaning—and which, according to their modern translation, denote that the person of whom she is thus speaking, instead of being away from home, is secretly lurking in one of the most secure and intimate of its receptacles. You may try to darken and transform this piece of casuistry as you will; and work up your own minds into the peaceable conviction that it is all right, and as it should be. But be very certain, that where the moral sense of your domestic is not already overthrown, there is at least one bosom within which you have raised a war of doubts and of difficulties; and where, if the victory be on your side, it will be on the side of him who is the great enemy of righteousness. There is at least one person along the line of this conveyance of deceit, who condemneth herself in that which she alloweth; who, in the language of Paul, esteeming the practice to be unclean, to her will it be unclean; who will perform her task with the offence of her own conscience, and to whom, therefore, it will indeed be evil; who cannot render obedience in this matter to her earthly superior, but by an act in which she does not stand clear and unconscious of guilt before God; and with whom, therefore, the sad consequence of what we can call nothing else than a barbarous combination against the principles and the prospects of the lower orders is—that as she has not cleaved fully unto the Lord, and has not kept by the service of the one Master, and has not forsaken all at His bidding, she cannot be the disciple of Christ.

The aphorism, that he who offendeth in one point is guilty of all, tells us something more than of the way in which God adjudges condemnation to the disobedient. It also tells us of the way in which one individual act of sinfulness operates upon our moral nature. It is altogether an erroneous view of the commandments, to look upon them as so many observances to which we are bound by as many distinct and independent ties of obligation—insomuch, that the transgression of one of them may be brought about by the dissolution of one separate tie, and may leave all the others with as entire a constraining influence and authority as before. The truth is, that the commandments ought rather to be looked upon as branching out from one great

and general tie of obligation ; and that there is no such thing as loosening the hold of one of them upon the conscience, but by the unfastening of that tie which binds them all upon the conscience. So that if one member in the system of practical righteousness be made to suffer, all the other members suffer along with it ; and if one decision of the moral sense be thwarted, the organ of the moral sense is permanently impaired, and a leaven of iniquity infused into all its other decisions ; and if one suggestion of this inward monitor be stifled, a general shock is given to his authority over the whole man ; and if one of the least commandments of the law is left unfulfilled, the law itself is brought down from its rightful ascendancy ; and thus it is, that one act of disobedience may be the commencement and the token of a systematic universal rebelliousness of the heart against God. It is this which gives such a wide-wasting malignity to each of the separate offences on which we have now expiated. It is this which so multiplies the means and the possibilities of corruption in the world. It is thus that, at every one point in the intercourse of human society, there may be struck out a fountain of poisonous emanation on all who approach it ; and think not therefore, that under each of the examples we have given, we were only contending for the preservation of one single feature in the character of him who stands exposed to this world's offences. We felt it, in fact, to be a contest for his eternity ; and that the case involved in it his general condition with God ; and that he who leads the young into a course of dissipation—or that he who tampers with their impressions of Sabbath sacredness—or that he who, either in the walks of business, or in the services of the family, makes them the agents of deceitfulness—or that he, in short, who tempts them to transgress in any one thing, has, in fact, poured such a pervading taint into their moral constitution, as to spoil or corrupt them in all things : and that thus, upon one solitary occasion, or by the exhibition of one particular offence, a mischief may be done equivalent to the total destruction of a human soul, or to the blotting out of its prospects for immortality.

And let us just ask a master or a mistress, who can thus make free with the moral principle of their servants in one instance, how they can look for pure or correct principle from them in other instances ? What right have they to complain of unfaithfulness against themselves, who have deliberately seduced another into a habit of unfaithfulness against God ? Are they so

utterly unskilled in the mysteries of our nature, as not to perceive, that if a man gather hardihood enough to break the Sabbath in opposition to his own conscience, this very hardihood will avail him to the breaking of other obligations?—that he whom, for their advantage, they have so exercised, as to fill his conscience with offence towards his God, will not scruple, for his own advantage, so to exercise himself, as to fill his conscience with offence towards his master?—that the servant whom you have taught to lie, has gotten such rudiments of education at your hand, as that, without any further help, he can now teach himself to purloin?—and yet nothing more frequent than loud and angry complainings against the treachery of servants; as if, in the general wreck of their other principles, a principle of consideration for the good and interest of their employer—and who, at the same time, has been their seducer—was to survive in all its power, and all its sensibility. It is just such a retribution as was to be looked for. It is a recoil upon their own heads of the mischief which they themselves have originated. It is the temporal part of the punishment which they have to bear for the sin of our text, but not the whole of it; for better for them that both person and property were cast into the sea, than that they should stand the reckoning of that day, when called to give an account of the souls that they have murdered, and the blood of so mighty a destruction is required at their hands.

The evil against which we have just protested, is an outrage of far greater enormity than tyrant or oppressor can inflict, in the prosecution of his worst designs against the political rights and liberties of the commonwealth. The very semblance of such designs will summon every patriot to his post of observation; and, from a thousand watchtowers of alarm, will the outcry of freedom in danger be heard throughout the land. But there is a conspiracy of a far more malignant influence upon the destinies of the species that is now going on; and which seems to call forth no indignant spirit, and to bring no generous exclamation along with it. Throughout all the recesses of private and domestic history, there is an ascendancy of rank and station against which no stern republican is ever heard to lift his voice—though it be an ascendancy, so exercised, as to be of most noxious operation to the dearest hopes and best interests of humanity. There is a cruel combination of the great against the majesty of the people—we mean the majesty of the people's

worth. There is a haughty unconcern about an inheritance, which, by an inalienable right, should be theirs—we mean their future and everlasting inheritance. There is a deadly invasion made on their rights—we mean their rights of conscience; and, in this our land of boasted privileges, are the low trampled upon by the high—we mean trampled into all the degradation of guilt and of worthlessness. They are utterly bereft of that homage which ought to be rendered to the dignity of their immortal nature; and to minister to the avarice of an imperious master, or to spare the sickly delicacy of the fashionables in our land, are the truth and the piety of our population, and all the virtues of their eternity, most unfeelingly plucked away from them. It belongs to others to fight the battle of their privileges in time. But who that looks with a calculating eye on their duration that never ends, can repress an alarm of a higher order? It belongs to others generously to struggle for the place and the adjustment of the lower orders in the great vessel of the state. But surely, the question of their place in eternity is of mightier concern than how they are to sit and be accommodated in that pathway vehicle which takes them to their everlasting habitations.

Christianity is, in one sense, the greatest of all levellers. It looks to the elements, and not to the circumstantial of humanity; and, regarding as altogether superficial and temporary the distinctions of this fleeting pilgrimage, it fastens on those points of assimilation which liken the king upon the throne to the very humblest of his subject population. They are alike in the nakedness of their birth. They are alike in the sureness of their decay. They are alike in the agonies of their dissolution. And after the one is tombed in sepulchral magnificence, and the other is laid in his sod-wrapt grave, are they most fearfully alike in the corruption to which they moulder. But it is with the immortal nature of each that Christianity has to do; and, in both the one and the other, does it behold a nature alike forfeited by guilt, and alike capable of being restored by the grace of an offered salvation. And never do the pomp and the circumstance of externals appear more humiliating, than when, looking onwards to the day of resurrection, we behold the sovereign standing without his crown, and trembling, with the subject by his side, at the bar of heaven's majesty. There the master and the servant will be brought to their reckoning together; and when the one is tried upon the guilt and the malignant influence of his Sabbath companies—and is charged

with the profane and careless habit of his household establishment—and is reminded how he kept both himself and his domestics from the solemn ordinance—and is made to perceive the fearful extent of the moral and spiritual mischief which he has wrought as the irreligious head of an irreligious family—and how, among other things, he, under a system of fashionable hypocrisy, so tampered with another's principles as to defile his conscience, and to destroy him—Oh! how tremendously will the little brief authority in which he now plays his fantastic tricks, turn to his own condemnation; for, than thus abuse his authority, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

And how comes it, we ask, that any master is armed with a power so destructive over the immortals who are around him? God has given him no such power. The state has not given it to him. There is no law, either human or divine, by which he can enforce any order upon his servants to an act of falsehood, or to an act of impiety. Should any such act of authority be attempted on the part of the master, it should be followed up on the part of the servant by an act of disobedience. Should your master or mistress bid you say *Not at home*, when you know that they are at home, it is your duty to refuse compliance with such an order: and if it be asked, how can this matter be adjusted after such a violent and alarming innovation on the laws of fashionable intercourse? we answer, just by the simple substitution of truth for falsehood—just by prescribing the utterance of, *Engaged*, which is a fact, instead of the utterance of, *Not at home*, which is a lie—just by holding the principles of your servant to be of higher account than the false delicacies of your acquaintance—just by a bold and vigorous recurrence to the simplicity of nature—just by determinedly doing what is right, though the example of a whole host were against you; and by giving impulse to the current of example, when it happens to be moving in a proper direction. And here we are happy to say that fashion has of late been making a capricious and accidental movement on the side of principle—and to be blunt, and open, and manly, is now on the fair way to be fashionable—and a temper of homelier quality is beginning to infuse itself into the luxuriousness, and the effeminacy, and the palling and excessive complaisance of genteel society—and the staple of cultivated manners is improving in firmness and frankness and honesty, and may, at length, by the aid of a principle of Christian rectitude, be so

interwoven with the cardinal virtues, as to present a different texture altogether from the soft and the silken degeneracy of modern days.

And that we may not appear the champions of an insurrection against the authority of masters, let us further say, that while it is the duty of clerk or apprentice to refuse the doing of week-day work on the Sabbath, and while it is the duty of servants to refuse the utterance of a prescribed falsehood, and while it is the duty of every dependant, in the service of his master, to serve him only in the Lord—yet this very principle, tending as it may to a rare and occasional act of disobedience, is also the principle which renders every servant who adheres to it a perfect treasure of fidelity, and attachment, and general obedience. This is the way in which to obtain a credit for his refusal, and to stamp upon it a noble consistency. In this way he will, even to the mind of an ungodly master, make up for all his particularities: and should he be what, if a Christian, he will be; should he be, at all times, the most alert in service, and the most patient of provocation, and the most cordial in affection, and the most scrupulously honest in the charge and custody of all that is committed to him—then, let the post of drudgery at which he toils be humble as it may, the contrast between the meanness of his office and the dignity of his character will only heighten the reverence that is due to principle, and make it more illustrious. His scruples may at first be the topics of displeasure, and afterwards the topics of occasional levity; but, in spite of himself, will his employer be at length constrained to look upon them with respectful toleration. The servant will be to the master a living epistle of Christ, and he may read there what he has not yet perceived in the letter of the New Testament. He may read, in the person of his own domestic, the power and the truth of Christianity. He may positively stand in awe of his own hired servant—and, regarding his bosom as a sanctuary of worth which it were monstrous to violate, will he feel, when tempted to offer one command of impiety, that he cannot, that he dare not.

And, before we conclude, let us, if possible, try to rebuke the wealthy out of their unfeeling indifference to the souls of the poor, by the example of the Saviour. Let those who look on the immortality of the poor as beneath their concern, only look unto Christ—to Him who, for the sake of the poorest of us all, became poor Himself, that we, through His poverty, might be made rich. Let them think how the principle of all these offences which we

have been attempting to expose, is in the direct face of that principle which prompted, at first, and which still presides over, the whole of the gospel dispensation. Let them learn a higher reverence for the eternity of those beneath them, by thinking of Him, who, to purchase an inheritance for the poor, and to provide them with the blessings of a preached gospel, unrobed Him of all His greatness; and descended Himself to the lot and the labours of poverty; and toiled, to the beginning of His public ministry, at the work of a carpenter; and submitted to all the horrors of a death which was aggravated by the burden of a world's atonement, and made inconceivably severe, by there being infused into it all the bitterness of the cup of expiation. Think, O think, when some petty design of avarice or vanity would lead you to forget the imperishable souls of those who are beneath you, that you are setting yourselves in diametric opposition to that which lieth nearest to the heart of the Saviour; that you are countervailing the whole tendency of His redemption; that you are thwarting the very object of that enterprise for which all heaven is represented as in motion—and angels are with wonder looking on—and God the Father laid an appointment on the Son of His love—and He, the august personage in whom the magnificent train of prophecy, from the beginning of the world, has its theme and its fulfilment, at length came amongst us, in shrouded majesty, and was led to the cross, like a lamb for the slaughter, and bowed His head in agony, and gave up the ghost.

And here let us address one word more to the masters and mistresses of families. By adopting the reformations to which we have been urging you, you may do good to the cause of Christianity, and yet not advance, by a single hair-breadth, the Christianity of your own souls. It is not by this one reformation, or, indeed, by any given number of reformations, that you are saved. It is by believing in Christ that men are saved. You may escape, it is sure, a higher degree of punishment, but you will not escape damnation. You may do good to the souls of your servants by a rigid observance of the lesson of this day. But we seek the good of your own souls also, and we pronounce upon them that they are in a state of death, till one great act be performed, and one act, too, which does not consist of any number of particular acts, or particular reformations. What shall I do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. And he who believeth not, the wrath of God abideth

on him. Do this, if you want to make the great and important transition for yourselves. Do this, if you want your own name to be blotted out of the book of condemnation. If you seek to have your own persons justified before God, submit to the righteousness of God—even that righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, and is unto all and upon all who believe. This is the turning-point of your acceptance with the Lawgiver. And at this step, also, in the history of your souls, will there be applied to you a power of motive, and will you be endowed with an obedient sensibility to the influence of motive, which will make it the turning-point of a new heart and a new character. The particular reformation that we have now been urging will be one of a crowd of other reformations; and, in the spirit of Him who pleased not Himself, but gave up His life for others, will you forego all the desires of selfishness and vanity, and look not merely to your own things, but also to the things of others.



## DISCOURSE VIII.

## ON THE LOVE OF MONEY.

“If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; if I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above.”—JOB xxxi. 24-28.

WHAT is worthy of remark in this passage is, that a certain affection, only known among the votaries of Paganism, should be classed under the same character and have the same condemnation with an affection, not only known, but allowed, nay cherished into habitual supremacy, all over Christendom. How universal is it among those who are in pursuit of wealth, to make gold their hope, and, among those who are in possession of wealth, to make fine gold their confidence! Yet we are here told that this is virtually as complete a renunciation of God as to practise some of the worst charms of idolatry. And it might perhaps serve to unsettle the vanity of those who, unsuspecting of the disease that is in their hearts, are wholly given over to this world, and wholly without alarm in their anticipations of another—could we convince them that the most reigning and resistless desire by which they are actuated, stamps the same perversity on them, in the sight of God, as He sees to be in those who are worshippers of the sun in the firmament, or are offering incense to the moon, as the queen of heaven.

We recoil from an idolater, as from one who labours under a great moral derangement, in suffering his regards to be carried away from the true God to an idol. But, is it not just the same derangement, on the part of man, that he should love any created good, and in the enjoyment of it lose sight of the Creator—that he should delight himself with the use and the possession of a gift, and be unaffected by the circumstance of its having been put into his hands by a giver—that, thoroughly absorbed with the present and the sensible gratification, there should be no room left for the movements of duty or regard to the Being who

furnished him with the materials, and endowed him with the organs, of every gratification,—that he should thus lavish all his desires on the surrounding materialism, and fetch from it all his delights, while the thought of him who formed it is habitually absent from his heart—that, in the play of those attractions that subsist between him and the various objects in the neighbourhood of his person, there should be the same want of reference to God, as there is in the play of those attractions which subsist between a piece of unconscious matter and the other matter that is around it—that all the influences which operate upon the human will should emanate from so many various points in the mechanism of what is formed, but that no practical or ascendant influence should come down upon it from the presiding and the preserving Deity? Why, if such be man, he could not be otherwise, though there were no Deity. The part he sustains in the world is the very same that it would have been, had the world sprung into being of itself; or, without an originating mind, had maintained its being from eternity. He just puts forth the evolutions of his own nature, as one of the component individuals in a vast independent system of nature, made up of many parts and many individuals. In hungering for what is agreeable to his senses, or recoiling from what is bitter or unsuitable to them, he does so without thinking of God, or borrowing any impulse to his own will from anything he knows or believes to be the will of God. Religion has just as little to do with those daily movements of his which are voluntary, as it has to do with the growth of his body, which is involuntary; or as it has to do, in other words, with the progress and the phenomena of vegetation. With a mind that ought to know God, and a conscience that ought to award to him the supreme jurisdiction, he lives as effectually without Him, as if he had no mind and no conscience; and, bating a few transient visitations of thought, and a few regularities of outward and mechanical observation, do we behold man running, and willing, and preparing, and enjoying, just as if there was no other portion than the creature—just as if the world, and its visible elements, formed the all with which he had to do.

I wish to impress upon you the distinction that there is between the love of money and the love of what money purchases. Either of these affections may equally displace God from the heart. But, there is a malignity and an inveteracy of atheism in the former which does not belong to the latter, and

in virtue of which it may be seen that the love of money is, indeed, the root of all evil.

When we indulge the love of that which is purchased by money, the materials of gratification, and the organs of gratification are present with each other—just as in the enjoyments of the inferior animals, and just as in all the simple and immediate enjoyments of man ; such as the tasting of food, or the smelling of a flower. There is an adaptation of the senses to certain external objects, and there is a pleasure arising out of that adaptation, and it is a pleasure which may be felt by man, along with a right and a full infusion of godliness. The primitive Christians, for example, ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God. But, in the case of every unconverted man, the pleasure has no such accompaniment. He carries in his heart no recognition of that hand, by the opening of which it is, that the means and the materials of enjoyment are placed within his reach. The matter of the enjoyment is all with which he is conversant. The Author of the enjoyment is unheeded. The avidity with which he rushes onward to any of the direct gratifications of nature bears a resemblance to the avidity with which one of the lower creation rushes to its food, or to its water, or to the open field, where it gambols in all the wantonness of freedom, and finds a high-breathed joy in the very strength and velocity of its movements. And the atheism of the former, who has a mind for the sense and knowledge of his Creator, is often as entire as the atheism of the latter, who has it not. Man, who ought to look to the primary cause of all his blessings, because he is capable of seeing thus far, is often as blind to God, in the midst of enjoyment, as the animal who is not capable of seeing Him. He can trace the stream to its fountain ; but still he drinks of the stream with as much greediness of pleasure, and as little recognition of its source, as the animal beneath him. In other words, his atheism, while tasting the bounties of Providence, is just as complete as is the atheism of the inferior animals. But theirs proceeds from their incapacity of knowing God. His proceeds from his not liking to retain God in his knowledge. He may come under the power of godliness, if he would. But he chooses rather that the power of sensuality should lord it over him, and his whole man is engrossed with the objects of sensuality.

But a man differs from an animal in being something more than a sensitive being. He is also a reflective being. He has

the power of thought, and inference, and anticipation, to signalize him above the beasts of the field or of the forest; and yet will it be found, in the case of every natural man, that the exercise of those powers, so far from having carried him nearer, has only widened his departure from God, and given a more deliberate and wilful character to his atheism than if he had been without them altogether.

In virtue of the powers of mind which belong to him, he can carry his thoughts beyond the present desires and the present gratification. He can calculate on the visitations of future desire, and on the means of its gratification. He can not only follow out the impulse of hunger that is now upon him; he can look onwards to the successive and recurring impulses of hunger which await him, and he can devise expedients for relieving it. Out of that great stream of supply, which comes direct from heaven to earth, for the sustenance of all its living generations, he can draw off and appropriate a separate rill of conveyance, and direct it into a reservoir for himself. He can enlarge the capacity, or he can strengthen the embankments of this reservoir. By doing the one, he augments his proportion of this common tide of wealth which circulates through the world, and by doing the other, he augments his security for holding it in perpetual possession. The animal who drinks out of the stream thinks not whence it issues. But man thinks of the reservoir which yields to him his portion of it. And he looks no further. He thinks not that to fill it, there must be a great and original fountain, out of which there issueth a mighty flood of abundance for the purpose of distribution among all the tribes and families of the world. He stops short at the secondary and artificial fabric which he himself hath formed, and out of which, as from a spring, he draws his own peculiar enjoyments; and never thinks either of his own peculiar supply fluctuating with the variations of the primary spring, or of connecting these variations with the will of the great but unseen director of all things. It is true, that if this main and originating fountain be, at any time, less copious in its emission, he will have less to draw from it to his own reservoir; and in that very proportion will his share of the bounties of Providence be reduced. But still it is to the well, or receptacle, of his own striking out that he looks, as his main security for the relief of nature's wants, and the abundant supply of nature's enjoyments. It is upon his own work that he depends in this matter, and not on the work or the will of Him who is the Author of nature;

who giveth rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filleth every heart with food and gladness. And thus it is that the reason of man, and the retrospective power of man, still fail to carry him, by an ascending process, to the First Cause. He stops at the instrumental cause, which, by his own wisdom and his own power, he has put into operation. In a word, the man's understanding is overrun with atheism, as well as his desires. The intellectual as well as the sensitive part of his constitution seems to be infected with it. When, like the instinctive and unreflecting animal, he engages in the act of direct enjoyment, he is like it, too, in its atheism. When he rises above the animal, and, in the exercise of his higher and larger faculties, he engages in the act of providing for enjoyment, he still carries his atheism along with him.

A sum of money is, in all its functions, equivalent to such a reservoir. Take one year with another, and the annual consumption of the world cannot exceed the annual produce which issues from the storehouse of Him who is the great and the bountiful Provider of all its families. The money that is in any man's possession represents the share which he can appropriate to himself of this produce. If it be a large sum, it is like a capacious reservoir on the bank of the river of abundance. If it be laid out on firm and stable securities, still it is like a firmly embanked reservoir. The man who toils to increase his money is like a man who toils to enlarge the capacity of his reservoir. The man who suspects a flaw in his securities, or who apprehends, in the report of failures and fluctuations, that his money is all to flow away from him, is like a man who apprehends a flaw in the embankments of his reservoir. Meanwhile, in all the care that is thus expended, either on the money or on the magazine, the originating source, out of which there is imparted to the one all its real worth, or there is imparted to the other all its real fulness, is scarcely ever thought of. Let God turn the earth into a barren desert, and the money ceases to be convertible to any purpose of enjoyment; or let Him lock up that magazine of great and general supply, out of which He showers abundance among our habitations, and all the subordinate magazines formed beside the wonted stream of liberality would remain empty. But all this is forgotten by the vast majority of our unthoughtful and unreflecting species. The patience of God is still unexhausted; and the seasons still roll in kindly succession over the heads of an ungrateful generation; and that period

when the machinery of our present system shall stop and be taken to pieces has not yet arrived; and that Spirit, who will not always strive with the children of men, is still prolonging His experiment on the powers and the perversities of our moral nature; and still suspending the edict of dissolution, by which this earth and these heavens are at length to pass away. So that the sun still shines upon us; and the clouds still drop upon us; and the earth still puts forth the bloom and the beauty of its luxuriance; and all the ministers of heaven's liberality still walk their annual round, and scatter plenty over the face of an alienated world; and the whole of nature continues as smiling in promise, and as sure in fulfilment, as in the days of our forefathers; and out of her large and universal granary is there, in every returning year, as rich a conveyance of aliment as before, to the populous family in whose behalf it is opened. But it is the business of many among that population, each to erect his own separate granary, and to replenish it out of the general store, and to feed himself and his dependants out of it. And he is right in so doing. But he is not right in looking to his own peculiar receptacle, as if it were the first and the emanating fountain of all his enjoyments. He is not right in thus idolizing the work of his own hands—awarding no glory and no confidence to Him in whose hands is the key of that great storehouse, out of which every lesser storehouse of man derives its fulness. He is not right in labouring after the money which purchaseth all things, to avert the earnestness of his regards from the Being who provides all things. He is not right, in thus building his security on that which is subordinate, unheeding and unmindful of Him who is supreme. It is not right that silver and gold, though unshaped into statuary, should still be doing in this enlightened land what the images of Paganism once did. It is not right that they should thus supplant the deference which is owing to the God and the governor of all things—or that each man amongst us should, in the secret homage of trust and satisfaction which he renders to his bills, and his deposits, and his deeds of property and possession, endow these various articles with the same moral ascendancy over his heart, as the household gods of antiquity had over the idolaters of antiquity—making them as effectually usurp the place of the Divinity, and dethrone the one Monarch of heaven and earth from that pre-eminence of trust and of affection that belongs to him.

He who makes a god of his pleasure, renders to this idol the

homage of his senses. He who makes a god of his wealth, renders to this idol the homage of his mind ; and he, therefore, of the two, is the more hopeless and determined idolater. The former is goaded on to his idolatry by the power of appetite. The latter cultivates his with wilful and deliberate perseverance ; consecrates his very highest powers to its service ; embarks in it, not with the heat of passion, but with the coolness of steady and calculating principle ; fully gives up his reason and his time, and all the faculties of his understanding, as well as all the desires of his heart, to the great object of a fortune in this world ; makes the acquirement of gain the settled aim, and the prosecution of that aim the settled habit of his existence ; sits the whole day long at the post of his ardent and unremitting devotions ; and, as he labours at the desk of his counting-house, has his soul just as effectually seduced from the living God to an object distinct from Him, and contrary to Him, as if the ledger over which he was bending was a book of mystical characters, written in honour of some golden idol placed before him, and with a view to render this idol propitious to himself and to his family. Baal and Moloch were not more substantially the gods of rebellious Israel, than Mammon is the god of all his affections. To the fortune he has reared, or is rearing, for himself and his descendants, he ascribes all the power and all the independence of a divinity. With the wealth he has gotten by his own hands, does he feel himself as independent of God, as the Pagan does, who, happy in the fancied protection of an image made with his own hand, suffers no disturbance to his quiet, from any thought of the real but the unknown Deity. His confidence is in his treasure, and not in God. It is there that he places all his safety and all his sufficiency. It is not on the Supreme Being, conceived in the light of a real and a personal agent, that he places his dependence. It is on a mute and material statue of his own erection. It is wealth which stands to him in the place of God—to which he awards the credit of all his enjoyments—which he looks to as the emanating fountain of all his present sufficiency—from which he gathers his fondest expectations of all the bright and fancied blessedness that is yet before him—on which he rests as the firmest and stablest foundation of all that the heart can wish, or the eye can long after, both for himself and for his children. It matters not to him, that all his enjoyment comes from a primary fountain, and that his wealth is only an intermediate reservoir. It matters not to him, that, if God were to set a seal upon the

door of the upper storehouse in heaven, or to blast and to burn up all the fruitfulness of earth, he would reduce, to the worthlessness of dross, all the silver and the gold that abound in it. Still the gold and the silver are his gods. His own fountain is between him and the fountain of original supply. His wealth is between him and God. Its various lodging-places, whether in the bank, or in the place of registration, or in the depository of wills and title-deeds—these are the sanctuaries of his secret worship—these are the high-places of his adoration; and never did devout Israelite look with more intentness towards Mount Zion, and with his face towards Jerusalem, than he does to his wealth, as to the mountain and stronghold of his security. Nor could the Supreme be more effectually deposed from the homage of trust and gratitude than He actually is, though this wealth were recalled from its various investments; and turned into one mass of gold; and cast into a piece of molten statuary; and enshrined on a pedestal, around which all his household might assemble, and make it the object of their family devotions; and plied every hour of every day with all the fooleries of a senseless and degrading Paganism. It is thus, that God may keep up the charge of idolatry against us, even after all its images have been overthrown. It is thus that dissuasives from idolatry are still addressed, in the New Testament, to the pupils of a new and better dispensation; that little children are warned against idols; and all of us are warned to flee from covetousness, which is idolatry.

To look no further than to fortune as the dispenser of all the enjoyments which money can purchase, is to make that fortune stand in the place of God. It is to make sense shut out faith, and to rob the King eternal and invisible of that supremacy, to which all the blessings of human existence, and all the varieties of human condition, ought, in every instance, and in every particular, to be referred. But, as we have already remarked, the love of money is one affection, and the love of what is purchased by money is another. It was, at first, we have no doubt, loved for the sake of the good things which it enabled its possessor to acquire. But whether, as the result of associations in the mind so rapid as to escape the notice of our own consciousness—or as the fruit of an infection running by sympathy among all men busily engaged in the prosecution of wealth, as the supreme good of their being—certain it is, that money, originally pursued for the sake of other things, comes at length to be prized for its own



sake. And, perhaps, there is no one circumstance which serves more to liken the love of money to the most irrational of the heathen idolatries, than that it at length passes into the love of money for itself; and acquires a most enduring power over the human affections, separately altogether from the power of purchase and of command which belongs to it, over the proper and original objects of human desire. The first thing which set man agoing in the pursuit of wealth, was that, through it, as an intervening medium, he found his way to other enjoyments; and it proves him, as we have observed, capable of a higher reach of anticipation than the beasts of the field, or the fowls of the air, that he is thus able to calculate, and to foresee, and to build up a provision for the wants of futurity. But mark how soon this boasted distinction of his faculties is overthrown, and how near to each other lie the dignity and the debasement of the human understanding. If it evinced a loftier mind in man than in the inferior animals, that he invented money, and by the acquisition of it can both secure abundance for himself, and transmit this abundance to the future generations of his family—what have we to offer, in vindication of this intellectual eminence, when we witness how soon it is that the pursuit of wealth ceases to be rational?—How, instead of being prosecuted as an instrument, either for the purchase of ease, or the purchase of enjoyment, both the ease and enjoyment of a whole life are rendered up as sacrifices at its shrine?—How, from being sought after as a minister of gratification to the appetites of nature, it at length brings nature into bondage, and robs her of all her simple delights, and pours the infusion of wormwood into the currency of her feelings?—making that man sad who ought to be cheerful, and that man who ought to rejoice in his present abundance, filling him either with the cares of an ambition which never will be satisfied, or with the apprehensions of a distress which, in all its pictured and exaggerated evils, will never be realized. And it is wonderful, it is passing wonderful, that wealth, which derives all that is true and sterling in its worth from its subserviency to other advantages, should, apart from all thought about this subserviency, be made the object of such fervent and fatiguing devotion. Insomuch, that never did Indian devotee inflict upon himself a severer agony at the footstool of his Paganism, than those devotees of wealth who, for its acquirement as their ultimate object, will forego all the uses for which alone it is valuable—will give up all that is genuine or tranquil in the pleasures of

life ; and will pierce themselves through with many sorrows ; and will undergo all the fiercer tortures of the mind ; and, instead of employing what they have to smooth their passage through the world, will, upon the hazardous sea of adventure, turn the whole of this passage into a storm—thus exalting wealth from a servant unto a lord, who, in return for the homage that he obtains from his worshippers, exercises them, like Rehoboam his subjects of old, not with whips but with scorpions—with consuming anxiety, with never-sated desire, with brooding apprehension, and its frequent and everfitting spectres, and the endless jealousies of competition with men as intently devoted, and as emulous of a high place in the temple of their common idolatry, as themselves. And, without going to the higher exhibitions of this propensity, in all its rage and in all its restlessness, we have only to mark its workings on the walk of even and every-day citizenship ; and there see, how, in the hearts even of its most commonplace votaries, wealth is followed after for its own sake ; how, unassociated with all for which reason pronounces it to be of estimation, but, in virtue of some mysterious and undefinable charm, operating not on any principle of the judgment, but on the utter perversity of judgment, money has come to be of higher account than all that is purchased by money, and has attained a rank co-ordinate with that which our Saviour assigns to the life and to the body of man, in being reckoned more than meat and more than raiment.—Thus making that which is subordinate to be primary, and that which is primary subordinate ; transferring, by a kind of fascination, the affections away from wealth in use, to wealth in idle and unemployed possession—insomuch, that the most welcome intelligence you could give to the proprietor of many a snug deposit, in some place of secure and progressive accumulation, would be, that he should never require any part either of it or of its accumulation back again for the purpose of expenditure—and that, to the end of his life, every new year should witness another unimpaired addition to the bulk or the aggrandizement of his idol. And it would just heighten his enjoyment, could he be told, with prophetic certainty, that this process of undisturbed augmentation would go on with his children's children, to the last age of the world ; that the economy of each succeeding race of descendants would leave the sum with its interest untouched, and the place of its sanctuary unviolated ; and, that through a series of indefinite generations, would the magnitude ever grow, and the lustre ever brighten, of that house-

hold god, which he had erected for his own senseless adoration, and bequeathed as an object of as senseless adoration to his family.

We have the authority of that word which has been pronounced a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, that it cannot have two masters, or that there is not room in it for two great and ascendant affections. The engrossing power of one such affection is expressly affirmed of the love for Mammon, or the love for money thus named and characterized as an idol. Or, in other words, if the love of money be in the heart, the love of God is not there. If a man be trusting in uncertain riches, he is not trusting in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy. If his heart be set upon covetousness, it is set upon an object of idolatry. The true divinity is moved away from His place; and, worse than atheism, which would only leave it empty, has the love of wealth raised another divinity upon His throne. So that covetousness offers a more daring and positive aggression on the right and territory of the Godhead, than even infidelity. The latter would only desolate the sanctuary of heaven; the former would set up an abomination in the midst of it. It not only strips God of love and of confidence, which are His prerogatives, but it transfers them to another. And little does the man who is proud in honour, but, at the same time, proud and peering in ambition—little does he think, that, though acquitted in the eye of all his fellows, there still remains an atrocity of a deeper character than even that of atheism, with which he is chargeable. Let him just take an account of his mind, amid the labours of his merchandise, and he will find that the living God has no ascendancy there; but that wealth, just as much as if personified into life, and agency, and power, wields over him all the ascendancy of God. Where his treasure is, his heart is also; and, linking as he does his main hope with its increase, and his main fear with its fluctuations and its failures, he has as effectually dethroned the Supreme from his heart, and deified an usurper in his room, as if fortune had been embodied into a goddess, and he were in the habit of repairing, with a crowd of other worshippers, to her temple. She, in fact, is the dispenser of that which he chiefly prizes in existence. A smile from her is worth all the promises of the Eternal, and her threatening frown more dreadful to the imagination than all His terrors.

And the disease is as near to universal as it is virulent.

Wealth is the goddess whom all the world worshipping. There is many a city in our empire, of which, with an eye of apostolical discernment, it may be seen, that it is almost wholly given over to idolatry. If a man look no higher than to his money for his enjoyments, then money is his god. It is the god of his dependence, and the god upon whom his heart is stayed. Or if, apart from other enjoyments, it, by some magical power of its own, has gotten the ascendancy, then still it is followed after as the supreme good; and there is an actual supplanting of the living God. He is robbed of the gratitude that we owe Him for our daily sustenance; for, instead of receiving it as if it came direct out of His hand, we receive it as if it came from the hand of a secondary agent, to whom we ascribe all the stability and independence of God. This wealth, in fact, obscures to us the character of God, as the real though unseen Author of our various blessings; and as if by a material intervention, does it hide from the perception of nature, the hand which feeds, and clothes, and maintains us in life, and in all the comforts and necessaries of life. It just has the effect of thickening still more that impalpable veil which lies between God and the eye of the senses. We lose all discernment of Him as the giver of our comforts; and coming, as they appear to do, from that wealth which our fancies have raised into a living personification, does this idol stand before us, not as a deputy but as a substitute for that Being, with whom it is that we really have to do. All this goes both to widen and to fortify that disruption which has taken place between God and the world. It adds the power of one great master idol to the seducing influence of all the lesser idolatries. When the liking and the confidence of men are towards money, there is no direct intercourse, either by the one or the other of these affections towards God; and, in proportion as he sends forth his desires, and rests his security on the former, in that very proportion does he renounce God as his hope, and God as his dependence.

And to advert, for one moment, to the misery of this affection, as well as to its sinfulness. He, over whom it reigns, feels a worthlessness in his present wealth, after it is gotten; and when to this we add the restlessness of a yet unsated appetite, lording it over all his convictions, and panting for more; when, to the dulness of his actual satisfaction in all the riches that he has, we add his still unquenched, and, indeed, unquenchable desire for the riches that he has not; when we reflect that as, in the

pursuit of wealth, he widens the circle of his operation, so he lengthens out the line of his open and hazardous exposure, and multiplies, along the extent of it, those vulnerable points from which another and another dart of anxiety may enter into his heart; when he feels himself as if floating on an ocean of contingency, on which, perhaps, he is only borne up by the breath of a credit that is fictitious, and which, liable to burst every moment, may leave him to sink under the weight of his overladen speculation; when, suspended on the doubtful result of his bold and uncertain adventure, he dreads the tidings of disaster in every arrival, and lives in a continual agony of feeling, kept up by the crowd and turmoil of his manifold distractions, and so overspreading the whole compass of his thoughts, as to leave not one narrow space for the thought of eternity—will any beholder just look to the mind of this unhappy man, thus tost and bewildered, and thrown into a general unceasing frenzy, made out of many fears and many agitations, and not say, that the bird of the air which sends forth its unreflecting song, and lives on the fortuitous bounty of Providence, is not higher in the scale of enjoyment than he? And how much more, then, the quiet Christian beside him, who, in possession of food and raiment, has that godliness with contentment which is great gain—who, with the peace of heaven in his heart, and the glories of heaven in his eye, has found out the true philosophy of existence; has sought a portion where alone a portion can be found, and, in bidding away from his mind the love of money, has bidden away all the cross and all the carefulness along with it.

Death will soon break up every swelling enterprise of ambition, and put upon it a most cruel and degrading mockery. And it is, indeed, an affecting sight, to behold the workings of this world's infatuation among so many of our fellow-mortals nearing and nearing every day to eternity, and yet, instead of taking heed to that which is before them, mistaking their temporary vehicle for their abiding home—and spending all their time and all their thought upon its accommodations. It is all the doing of our great adversary, thus to invest the trifles of a day in such characters of greatness and durability; and it is, indeed, one of the most formidable of his wiles. And whatever may be the instrument of reclaiming men from this delusion, it certainly is not any argument either about the shortness of life, or the certainty and awfulness of its approaching termination. On this point man is capable of a stout-hearted resistance, even to ocular

demonstration ; nor do we know a more striking evidence of the derangement which must have passed upon the human faculties, than to see how, in despite of arithmetic—how, in despite of manifold experience—how, in despite of all his gathering wrinkles, and all his growing infirmities—how, in despite of the everlessening distance between him and his sepulchre, and of all the tokens of preparation for the onset of the last messenger, with which, in the shape of weakness, and breathlessness, and dimness of eyes, he is visited ; will the feeble and asthmatic man still shake his silver locks in all the glee and transport of which he is capable, when he hears of his gainful adventures, and his new accumulations. Nor can we tell how near he must get to his grave, or how far on he must advance in the process of dying, ere gain cease to delight, and the idol of wealth cease to be dear to him. But when we see that the topic is trade and its profits, which lights up his faded eye with the glow of its chiefest ecstasy, we are as much satisfied that he leaves the world with all his treasure there, and all the desires of his heart there, as if, acting what is told of the miser's deathbed, he made his bills and his parchments of security the companions of his bosom, and the last movements of his life were a fearful, tenacious, determined grasp, of what to him formed the all for which life was valuable.

## DISCOURSE IX.

## THE EXPULSIVE POWER OF A NEW AFFECTION.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”—1 JOHN ii. 15.

THERE are two ways in which a practical moralist may attempt to displace from the human heart its love of the world—either by a demonstration of the world’s vanity, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon simply to withdraw its regards from an object that is not worthy of it; or, by setting forth another object, even God, as more worthy of its attachment, so as that the heart shall be prevailed upon not to resign an old affection, which shall have nothing to succeed it, but to exchange an old affection for a new one. My purpose is to show, that from the constitution of our nature, the former method is altogether incompetent and ineffectual—and that the latter method will alone suffice for the rescue and recovery of the heart from the wrong affection that domineers over it. After having accomplished this purpose, I shall attempt a few practical observations.

Love may be regarded in two different conditions. The first is, when its object is at a distance, and then it becomes love in a state of desire. The second is, when its object is in possession, and then it becomes love in a state of indulgence. Under the impulse of desire, man feels himself urged onward in some path or pursuit of activity for its gratification. The faculties of his mind are put into busy exercise. In the steady direction of one great and engrossing interest, his attention is recalled from the many reveries into which it might otherwise have wandered; and the powers of his body are forced away from an indolence in which it else might have languished; and that time is crowded with occupation, which but for some object of keen and devoted ambition, might have drivelled along in successive hours of weariness and distaste—and though hope does not always enliven, and success does not always crown this career of exertion, yet in the midst of this very variety, and with the alternations of occa-

sional disappointment, is the machinery of the whole man kept in a sort of congenial play, and upholden in that tone and temper which are most agreeable to it. Insomuch, that if, through the extirpation of that desire which forms the originating principle of all this movement, the machinery were to stop, and to receive no impulse from another desire substituted in its place, the man would be left with all his propensities to action in a state of most painful and unnatural abandonment. A sensitive being suffers, and is in violence, if, after having thoroughly rested from his fatigue, or been relieved from his pain, he continue in possession of powers without any excitement to these powers; if he possess a capacity of desire without having an object of desire; or if he have a spare energy upon his person, without a counterpart, and without a stimulus to call it into operation. The misery of such a condition is often realized by him who is retired from business, or who is retired from law, or who is even retired from the occupations of the chase, and of the gaming table. Such is the demand of our nature for an object in pursuit, that no accumulation of previous success can extinguish it—and thus it is, that the most prosperous merchant, and the most victorious general, and the most fortunate gamester, when the labour of their respective vocations has come to a close, are often found to languish in the midst of all their acquisitions, as if out of their kindred and rejoicing element. It is quite in vain with such a constitutional appetite for employment in man, to attempt cutting away from him the spring or the principle of one employment, without providing him with another. The whole heart and habit will rise in resistance against such an undertaking. The else unoccupied female who spends the hours of every evening at some play of hazard, knows as well as you, that the pecuniary gain, or the honourable triumph of a successful contest, are altogether paltry. It is not such a demonstration of vanity as this that will force her away from her dear and delightful occupation. The habit cannot so be displaced, as to leave nothing but a negative and cheerless vacancy behind it—though it may so be supplanted as to be followed up by another habit of employment, to which the power of some new affection has constrained her. It is willingly suspended, for example, on any single evening, should the time that wont to be allotted to gaming, require to be spent on the preparations of an approaching assembly. The ascendant power of a second affection will do what no exposition however forcible, of the folly and worthlessness of the first, ever could



effectuate. And it is the same in the great world. We shall never be able to arrest any of its leading pursuits, by a naked demonstration of their vanity. It is quite in vain to think of stopping one of these pursuits in any way else, but by stimulating to another. In attempting to bring a worldly man intent and busied with the prosecution of his objects to a dead stand, we have not merely to encounter the charm which he annexes to these objects—but we have to encounter the pleasure which he feels in the very prosecution of them. It is not enough, then, that we dissipate the charm by a moral and eloquent and affecting exposure of its illusiveness. We must address to the eye of his mind another object, with a charm powerful enough to dispossess the first of its influences, and to engage him in some other prosecution as full of interest, and hope, and congenial activity, as the former. It is this which stamps an impotency on all moral and pathetic declamation about the insignificance of the world. A man will no more consent to the misery of being without an object, because that object is a trifle, or of being without a pursuit, because that pursuit terminates in some frivolous or fugitive acquirement, than he will voluntarily submit himself to the torture, because that torture is to be of short duration. If to be without desire and without exertion altogether, is a state of violence and discomfort, then the present desire, with its correspondent train of exertion, is not to be got rid of simply by destroying it. It must be by substituting another desire, and another line or habit of exertion in its place—and the most effectual way of withdrawing the mind from one object, is not by turning it away upon desolate and unpeopled vacancy—but by presenting to its regards another object still more alluring.

These remarks apply not merely to love considered in its state of desire for an object not yet obtained. They apply also to love considered in its state of indulgence, or placid gratification, with an object already in possession. It is seldom that any of our tastes are made to disappear by a mere process of natural extinction. At least, it is very seldom, that this is done through the instrumentality of reasoning. It may be done by excessive pampering—but it is almost never done by the mere force of mental determination. But what cannot be thus destroyed, may be dispossessed—and one taste may be made to give way to another, and to lose its power entirely as the reigning affection of the mind. It is thus, that the boy ceases, at length, to be the slave of his appetite, but it is because a manlier taste has now

brought it into subordination—and that the youth ceases to idolize pleasure, but it is because the idol of wealth has become the stronger and gotten the ascendancy—and that even the love of money ceases to have the mastery over the heart of many a thriving citizen, but it is because, drawn into the whirl of city politics, another affection has been wrought into his moral system and he is now lorded over by the love of power. There is not one of these transformations in which the heart is left without an object. Its desire for one particular object may be conquered; but as to its desire for having some one object or other, this is unconquerable. Its adhesion to that on which it has fastened the preference of its regards, cannot willingly be overcome by the rending away of a simple separation. It can be done only by the application of something else, to which it may feel the adhesion of a still stronger and more powerful preference. Such is the grasping tendency of the human heart, that it must have a something to lay hold of—and which, if wrested away without the substitution of another something in its place, would leave a void and a vacancy as painful to the mind, as hunger is to the natural system. It may be dispossessed of one object, or of any, but it cannot be desolated of all. Let there be a breathing and a sensitive heart, but without a liking and without affinity to any of the things that are around it; and, in a state of cheerless abandonment, it would be alive to nothing but the burden of its own consciousness, and feel it to be intolerable. It would make no difference to its owner, whether he dwelt in the midst of a gay and goodly world; or, placed afar beyond the outskirts of creation, he dwelt a solitary unit in dark and unpeopled nothingness. The heart must have something to cling to—and never, by its own voluntary consent, will it so denude itself of all its attachments, that there shall not be one remaining object that can draw or solicit it.

The misery of a heart thus bereft of all relish for that which wont to minister enjoyment, is strikingly exemplified in those, who, satiated with indulgence, have been so belaboured, as it were, with the variety and the poignancy of the pleasurable sensations they have experienced, that they are at length fatigued out of all capacity for sensation whatever. The disease of ennui is more frequent in the French metropolis, where amusement is more exclusively the occupation of the higher classes, than it is in the British metropolis, where the longings of the heart are more diversified by the resources of business and politics. There

are the votaries of fashion, who in this way have at length become the victims of fashionable excess—in whom the very multitude of their enjoyments has at last extinguished their power of enjoyment—who, with the gratifications of art and nature at command, now look upon all that is around them with an eye of tastelessness—who, plied with the delights of sense and of splendour even to weariness, and incapable of higher delights, have come to the end of all their perfection, and like Solomon of old, found it to be vanity and vexation. The man whose heart has thus been turned into a desert, can vouch for the insupportable languor which must ensue when one affection is thus plucked away from the bosom without another to replace it. It is not necessary that a man receive pain from anything, in order to become miserable. It is barely enough that he looks with distaste to everything; and in that asylum which is the repository of minds out of joint, and where the organ of feeling as well as the organ of intellect has been impaired, it is not in the cell of loud and frantic outcries where we shall meet with the acmé of mental suffering. But that is the individual who outpeers in wretchedness all his fellows, who, throughout the whole expanse of nature and society, meets not an object that has at all the power to detain or to interest him; who, neither in earth beneath nor in heaven above, knows of a single charm to which his heart can send forth one desirous or responding movement; to whom the world, in his eye a vast and empty desolation, has left him nothing but his own consciousness to feed upon—dead to all that is without him, and alive to nothing but to the load of his own torpid and useless existence.

It will now be seen, perhaps, why it is that the heart keeps by its present affections with so much tenacity—when the attempt is to do them away by a mere process of extirpation. It will not consent to be so desolated. The strong man, whose dwelling-place is there, may be compelled to give way to another occupier; but unless another stronger than he has power to dispossess and to succeed him, he will keep his present lodgment inviolable. The heart would revolt against its own emptiness. It could not bear to be so left in a state of waste and cheerless insipidity. The moralist who tries such a process of dispossession as this upon the heart, is thwarted at every step by the recoil of its own mechanism. You have all heard that Nature abhors a vacuum. Such at least is the nature of the heart, that though the room which is in it may change one in-

mate for another, it cannot be left void without the pain of most intolerable suffering. It is not enough, then, to argue the folly of an existing affection. It is not enough, in the terms of a forcible or an affecting demonstration, to make good the evanescence of its object. It may not even be enough to associate the threats and the terrors of some coming vengeance with the indulgence of it. The heart may still resist the every application, by obedience to which it would finally be conducted to a state so much at war with all its appetites as that of downright inanition. So to tear away an affection from the heart as to leave it bare of all its regards and of all its preferences, were a hard and hopeless undertaking—and it would appear as if the alone powerful engine of dispossession were to bring the mastery of another affection to bear upon it.

We know not a more sweeping interdict upon the affections of Nature, than that which is delivered by the Apostle in the verse before us. To bid a man into whom there has not yet entered the great and ascendant influence of the principle of regeneration, to bid him withdraw his love from all the things that are in the world, is to bid him give up all the affections that are in his heart. The world is the all of a natural man. He has not a taste nor a desire that points not to a something placed within the confines of its visible horizon. He loves nothing above it, and he cares for nothing beyond it; and to bid him love not the world, is to pass a sentence of expulsion on all the inmates of his bosom. To estimate the magnitude and the difficulty of such a surrender, let us only think that it were just as arduous to prevail on him not to love wealth, which is but one of the things in the world, as to prevail on him to set wilful fire to his own property. This he might do with sore and painful reluctance, if he saw that the salvation of his life hung upon it. But this he would do willingly, if he saw that a new property of tenfold value was instantly to emerge from the wreck of the old one. In this case there is something more than the mere displacement of an affection. There is the overbearing of one affection by another. But to desolate his heart of all love for the things of the world, without the substitution of any love in its place, were to him a process of as unnatural violence as to destroy all the things that he has in the world, and give him nothing in their room. So that, if to love not the world be indispensable to one's Christianity, then the crucifixion of the old man is not too strong a term to mark that transition in his his-

tory, when all old things are done away, and all things become new.

We hope that by this time you understand the impotency of a mere demonstration of this world's insignificance. Its sole practical effect, if it had any, would be to leave the heart in a state which to every heart is insupportable, and that is a mere state of nakedness and negation. You may remember the fond and unbroken tenacity with which your heart has often recurred to pursuits, over the utter frivolity of which it sighed and wept but yesterday. The arithmetic of your short-lived days may on Sabbath make the clearest impression upon your understanding—and from his fancied bed of death, may the preacher cause a voice to descend in rebuke and mockery on all the pursuits of earthliness—and as he pictures before you the fleeting generations of men, with the absorbing grave, whither all the joys and interests of the world hasten to their sure and speedy oblivion, may you, touched and solemnized by his argument, feel for a moment as if on the eve of a practical and permanent emancipation from a scene of so much vanity. But the morrow comes, and the business of the world, and the objects of the world, and the moving forces of the world come along with it—and the machinery of the heart, in virtue of which it must have something to grasp, or something to adhere to, brings it under a kind of moral necessity to be actuated just as before—and in utter repulsion towards a state so unkindly as that of being frozen out both of delight and of desire, does it feel all the warmth and the urgency of its wonted solicitations—nor in the habit and history of the whole man, can we detect so much as one symptom of the new creature—so that the church, instead of being to him a school of obedience, has been a mere sauntering place for the luxury of a passing and theatrical emotion; and the preaching which is mighty to compel the attendance of multitudes, which is mighty to still and to solemnize the hearers into a kind of tragic sensibility, which is mighty in the play of variety and vigour that it can keep up around the imagination, is not mighty to the pulling down of strong holds.

The love of the world cannot be expunged by a mere demonstration of the world's worthlessness. But may it not be supplanted by the love of that which is more worthy than itself? The heart cannot be prevailed upon to part with the world by a simple act of resignation. But may not the heart be prevailed upon to admit into its preference another, who shall subordinate

the world, and bring it down from its wonted ascendancy? If the throne which is placed there must have an occupier, and the tyrant that now reigns has occupied it wrongfully, he may not leave a bosom which would rather detain him than be left in desolation. But may he not give way to the lawful sovereign, appearing with every charm that can secure His willing admittance, and taking unto Himself His great power to subdue the moral nature of man, and to reign over it? In a word, if the way to disengage the heart from the positive love of one great and ascendant object is to fasten it in positive love to another, then it is not by exposing the worthlessness of the former, but by addressing to the mental eye the worth and excellence of the latter, that all old things are to be done away, and all things are to become new.

To obliterate all our present affections by simply expunging them, and so as to leave the seat of them unoccupied, would be to destroy the old character, and to substitute no new character in its place. But when they take their departure upon the ingress of other visitors; when they resign their sway to the power and the predominance of new affections; when, abandoning the heart to solitude, they merely give place to a successor who turns it into as busy a residence of desire and interest and expectation as before—there is nothing in all this to thwart or to overbear any of the laws of our sentient nature—and we see how, in fullest accordance with the mechanism of the heart, a great moral revolution may be made to take place upon it.

This, we trust, will explain the operation of that charm which accompanies the effectual preaching of the gospel. The love of God and the love of the world are two affections, not merely in a state of rivalry, but in a state of enmity—and that so irreconcilable, that they cannot dwell together in the same bosom. We have already affirmed how impossible it were for the heart, by any innate elasticity of its own, to cast the world away from it, and thus reduce itself to a wilderness. The heart is not so constituted; and the only way to dispossess it of an old affection, is by the expulsive power of a new one. Nothing can exceed the magnitude of the required change in a man's character—when bidden, as he is in the New Testament, to love not the world; no, nor any of the things that are in the world—for this so comprehends all that is dear to him in existence, as to be equivalent to a command of self-annihilation. But the same revelation which dictates so mighty an obedience, places within

our reach as mighty an instrument of obedience. It brings for admittance to the very door of our heart an affection, which, once seated upon its throne, will either subordinate every previous inmate, or bid it away. Beside the world, it places before the eye of the mind Him who made the world, and with this peculiarity, which is all its own—that in the Gospel do we so behold God, as that we may love God. It is there, and there only, where God stands revealed as an object of confidence to sinners—and where our desire after Him is not chilled into apathy, by that barrier of human guilt which intercepts every approach that is not made to Him through the appointed Mediator. It is the bringing in of this better hope, whereby we draw nigh unto God—and to live without hope is to live without God; and if the heart be without God, the world will then have all the ascendancy. It is God apprehended by the believer as God in Christ, who alone can dispost it from this ascendancy. It is when He stands dismantled of the terrors which belong to Him as an offended lawgiver, and when we are enabled by faith, which is His own gift, to see His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and to hear His beseeching voice as it protests good-will to men, and entreats the return of all who will to a full pardon and a gracious acceptance—it is then that a love paramount to the love of the world, and at length expulsive of it, first arises in the regenerated bosom. It is when released from the spirit of bondage with which love cannot dwell, and when admitted into the number of God's children through the faith that is in Christ Jesus, the Spirit of adoption is poured upon us—it is then that the heart, brought under the mastery of one great and predominant affection, is delivered from the tyranny of its former desires in the only way in which deliverance is possible. And that faith which is revealed to us from heaven as indispensable to a sinner's justification in the sight of God, is also the instrument of the greatest of all moral and spiritual achievements on a nature dead to the influence, and beyond the reach, of every other application.

Thus may we come to perceive what it is that makes the most effective kind of preaching. It is not enough to hold out to the world's eye the mirror of its own imperfections. It is not enough to come forth with a demonstration, however pathetic, of the evanescent character of all its enjoyments. It is not enough to travel the walk of experience along with you, and speak to your own conscience and your own recollection, of the

deceitfulness of the heart, and the deceitfulness of all that the heart is set upon. There is many a bearer of the gospel message who has not shrewdness of natural discernment enough, and who has not power of characteristic description enough, and who has not the talent of moral delineation enough, to present you with a vivid and faithful sketch of the existing follies of society. But that very corruption which he has not the faculty of representing in its visible details, he may practically be the instrument of eradicating in its principle. Let him be but a faithful expounder of the gospel testimony—unable as he may be to apply a descriptive hand to the character of the present world, let him but report with accuracy the matter which revelation has brought to him from a distant world—unskilled as he is in the work of so anatomizing the heart, as with the power of a novelist to create a graphical or impressive exhibition of the worthlessness of its many affections—let him only deal in those mysteries of peculiar doctrine, on which the best of novelists have thrown the wantonness of their derision. He may not be able, with the eye of shrewd and satirical observation, to expose to the ready recognition of his hearers the desires of worldliness—but with the tidings of the gospel in commission, he may wield the only engine that can extirpate them. He cannot do what some have done, when, as if by the hand of a magician, they have brought out to view, from the hidden recesses of our nature, the foibles and lurking appetites which belong to it.—But he has a truth in his possession which, into whatever heart it enters, will, like the rod of Aaron, swallow up them all; and unqualified as he may be to describe the old man in all the nicer shading of his natural and constitutional varieties, with him is deposited that ascendant influence under which the leading tastes and tendencies of the old man are destroyed, and he becomes a new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us not cease, then, to ply the only instrument of powerful and positive operation to do away from you the love of the world. Let us try every legitimate method of finding access to your hearts for the love of Him who is greater than the world. For this purpose, let us if possible clear away that shroud of unbelief which so hides and darkens the face of the Deity. Let us insist on His claims to your affection—and whether in the shape of gratitude or in the shape of esteem, let us never cease to affirm, that in the whole of that wondrous economy, the purpose of which is to reclaim a sinful world unto Himself—he, the



God of love, so sets Himself forth in characters of endearment, that nought but faith and nought but understanding are wanting, on your part, to call forth the love of your hearts back again.

And here let us advert to the incredulity of a worldly man : when he brings his own sound and secular experience to bear upon the high doctrines of Christianity—when he looks on regeneration as a thing impossible—when, feeling as he does, the obstinacies of his own heart on the side of things present, and casting an intelligent eye, much exercised perhaps in the observation of human life, on the equal obstinacies of all who are around him, he pronounces this whole matter about the crucifixion of the old man, and the resurrection of a new man in his place, to be in downright opposition to all that is known and witnessed of the real nature of humanity. We think that we have seen such men, who, firmly trenched in their own vigorous and homebred sagacity, and shrewdly regardful of all that passes before them through the week, and upon the scenes of ordinary business, look on that transition of the heart by which it gradually dies unto time, and awakens in all the life of a new-felt and ever-growing desire towards God, as a mere Sabbath speculation ; and who thus, with all their attention engrossed upon the concerns of earthliness, continue unmoved to the end of their days, amongst the feelings and the appetites and the pursuits of earthliness. If the thought of death, and another state of being after it, comes across them at all, it is not with a change so radical as that of being born again that they ever connect the idea of preparation. They have some vague conception of its being quite enough that they acquit themselves in some decent and tolerable way of their relative obligations ; and that, upon the strength of some such social and domestic moralities as are often realized by him into whose heart the love of God has never entered, they will be transplanted in safety from this world, where God is the Being with whom it may almost be said that they have had nothing to do, to that world where God is the Being with whom they will have mainly and immediately to do throughout all eternity. They admit all that is said of the utter vanity of time, when taken up with as a resting-place. But they resist every application made upon the heart of man with the view of so shifting its tendencies, that it shall not henceforth find in the interests of time all its rest and all its refreshment. They, in fact, regard such an attempt as an enter-

prise that is altogether aerial—and with a tone of secular wisdom, caught from the familiarities of every-day experience, do they see a visionary character in all that is said of setting our affections on the things that are above; and of walking by faith; and of keeping our hearts in such a love of God as shall shut out from them the love of the world; and of having no confidence in the flesh; and of so renouncing earthly things as to have our conversation in heaven.

Now, it is altogether worthy of being remarked of those men who thus disrelish spiritual Christianity, and in fact deem it an impracticable acquirement, how much of a piece their incredulity about the demands of Christianity, and their incredulity about the doctrines of Christianity, are with one another. No wonder that they feel the work of the New Testament to be beyond their strength, so long as they hold the words of the New Testament to be beneath their attention. Neither they nor any one else can dispossess the heart of an old affection but by the expulsive power of a new one; and if that new affection be the love of God, neither they nor any one else can be made to entertain it, but on such a representation of the Deity as shall draw the heart of the sinner towards Him. Now it is just their unbelief which screens from the discernment of their minds this representation. They do not see the love of God in sending His Son unto the world. They do not see the expression of His tenderness to men in sparing Him not, but giving Him up unto the death for us all. They do not see the sufficiency of the atonement, or the sufferings that were endured by Him who bore the burden that sinners should have borne. They do not see the blended holiness and compassion of the Godhead, in that He passed by the transgressions of His creatures, yet could not pass them by without an expiation. It is a mystery to them how a man should pass to the state of godliness from a state of nature; but had they only a believing view of God manifest in the flesh, this would resolve for them the whole mystery of godliness. As it is, they cannot get quit of their old affections, because they are out of sight from all those truths which have influence to raise a new one. They are like the children of Israel in the land of Egypt, when required to make bricks without straw—they cannot love God, while they want the only food which can aliment this affection in a sinner's bosom—and however great their errors may be both in resisting the demands of the gospel as impracticable, and in rejecting the doctrines of the

gospel as inadmissible, yet there is not a spiritual man (and it is the prerogative of him who is spiritual to judge all men) who will not perceive that there is a consistency in these errors.

But if there be a consistency in the errors, in like manner is there a consistency in the truths which are opposite to them. The man who believes in the peculiar doctrines, will readily bow to the peculiar demands of Christianity. When he is told to love God supremely, this may startle another; but it will not startle him to whom God has been revealed in peace, and in pardon, and in all the freeness of an offered reconciliation. When told to shut out the world from his heart, this may be impossible with him who has nothing to replace it—but not impossible with him who has found in God a sure and a satisfying portion. When told to withdraw his affections from the things that are beneath, this were laying an order of self-extinction upon the man who knows not another quarter in the whole sphere of his contemplation to which he could transfer them—but it were not grievous to him whose view has been opened up to the loveliness and glory of the things that are above, and can there find for every feeling of his soul, a most ample and delighted occupation. When told to look not to the things that are seen and temporal, this were blotting out the light of all that is visible from the prospect of him in whose eye there is a wall of partition between guilty nature and the joys of eternity—but he who believes that Christ hath broken down this wall, finds a gathering radiance upon his soul, as he looks onwards in faith to the things that are unseen and eternal. Tell a man to be holy—and how can he compass such a performance, when his alone fellowship with holiness is a fellowship of despair? It is the atonement of the cross reconciling the holiness of the lawgiver with the safety of the offender, that hath opened the way for a sanctifying influence into the sinner's heart; and he can take a kindred impression from the character of God now brought nigh, and now at peace with him. Separate the demand from the doctrine; and you have either a system of righteousness that is impracticable, or a barren orthodoxy. Bring the demand and the doctrine together—and the true disciple of Christ is able to do the one, through the other strengthening him. The motive is adequate to the movement; and the bidden obedience of the gospel is not beyond the measure of his strength, just because the doctrine of the gospel is not beyond the measure of his acceptance. The shield of faith, and the hope of salvation, and the Word of God,

and the girdle of truth—these are the armour that he has put on; and with these the battle is won, and the eminence is reached, and the man stands on the vantage-ground of a new field, and a new prospect. The effect is great, but the cause is equal to it—and stupendous as this moral resurrection to the precepts of Christianity undoubtedly is, there is an element of strength enough to give it being and continuance in the principles of Christianity.

The object of the gospel is both to pacify the sinner's conscience, and to purify his heart; and it is of importance to observe, that what mars the one of these objects, mars the other also. The best way of casting out an impure affection is to admit a pure one; and by the love of what is good, to expel the love of what is evil. Thus it is, that the freer the gospel, the more sanctifying is the gospel; and the more it is received as a doctrine of grace, the more will it be felt as a doctrine according to godliness. This is one of the secrets of the Christian life, that the more a man holds of God as a pensioner, the greater is the payment of service that he renders back again. On the tenure of "Do this and live," a spirit of fearfulness is sure to enter; and the jealousies of a legal bargain chase away all confidence from the intercourse between God and man; and the creature striving to be square and even with his Creator, is, in fact, pursuing all the while his own selfishness, instead of God's glory; and with all the conformities which he labours to accomplish, the soul of obedience is not there, the mind is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed under such an economy ever can be. It is only when, as in the gospel, acceptance is bestowed as a present, without money and without price, that the security which man feels in God is placed beyond the reach of disturbance—or, that he can repose in Him, as one friend reposes in another—or, that any liberal and generous understanding can be established betwixt them—the one party rejoicing over the other to do him good—the other finding that the truest gladness of his heart lies in the impulse of a gratitude, by which it is awakened to the charms of a new moral existence. Salvation by grace—salvation by free grace—salvation not of works, but according to the mercy of God—salvation on such a footing is not more indispensable to the deliverance of our persons from the hand of justice, than it is to the deliverance of our hearts from the chill and the weight of ungodliness. Retain a single shred or fragment of legality with the gospel, and we raise a topic of distrust

between man and God. We take away from the power of the gospel to melt and to conciliate. For this purpose, the freer it is, the better it is. That very peculiarity which so many dread as the germ of antinomianism, is, in fact, the germ of a new spirit, and a new inclination against it. Along with the light of a free gospel, does there enter the love of the gospel, which, in proportion as we impair the freeness, we are sure to chase away. And never does the sinner find within himself so mighty a moral transformation, as when, under the belief that he is saved by grace, he feels constrained thereby to offer his heart a devoted thing, and to deny ungodliness.

To do any work in the best manner, we should make use of the fittest tools for it. And we trust, that what has been said may serve in some degree, for the practical guidance of those who would like to reach the great moral achievement of our text—but feel that the tendencies and desires of nature are too strong for them. We know of no other way by which to keep the love of the world out of our heart, than to keep in our hearts the love of God—and no other way by which to keep our hearts in the love of God, than building ourselves up on our most holy faith. That denial of the world which is not possible to him that dissents from the gospel testimony, is possible even as all things are possible, to him that believeth. To try this without faith, is to work without the right tool or the right instrument. But faith worketh by love; and the way of expelling from the heart the love which transgresseth the law, is to admit into its receptacles the love which fulfilleth the law.

Conceive a man to be standing on the margin of this green world; and that, when he looked towards it, he saw abundance smiling upon every field, and all the blessings which earth can afford scattered in profusion throughout every family, and the light of the sun sweetly resting upon all the pleasant habitations, and the joys of human companionship brightening many a happy circle of society—conceive this to be the general character of the scene upon one side of his contemplation; and that on the other, beyond the verge of the goodly planet on which he was situated, he could descry nothing but a dark and fathomless unknown. Think you that he would bid a voluntary adieu to all the brightness and all the beauty that were before him upon earth, and commit himself to the frightful solitude away from it? Would he leave its peopled dwelling-places, and become a solitary wanderer through the fields of nonentity? If space offered him

nothing but a wilderness, would he for it abandon the homebred scenes of life and of cheerfulness that lay so near, and exerted such a power of urgency to detain him? Would not he cling to the regions of sense, and of life, and of society?—and shrinking away from the desolation that was beyond it, would not he be glad to keep his firm footing on the territory of this world, and to take shelter under the silver canopy that was stretched over it?

But if, during the time of his contemplation, some happy island of the blest had floated by; and there had burst upon his senses the light of its surpassing glories, and its sounds of sweeter melody; and he clearly saw that there a purer beauty rested upon every field, and a more heartfelt joy spread itself among all the families; and he could discern there, a peace, and a piety, and a benevolence, which put a moral gladness into every bosom, and united the whole society in one rejoicing sympathy with each other, and with the beneficent Father of them all.—Could he further see, that pain and mortality were there unknown; and above all, that signals of welcome were hung out, and an avenue of communication was made for him—perceive you not, that what was before the wilderness, would become the land of invitation; and that now the world would be the wilderness? What unpeopled space could not do, can be done by space teeming with beatific scenes, and beatific society. And let the existing tendencies of the heart be what they may to the scene that is near and visibly around us, still if another stood revealed to the prospect of man, either through the channel of faith, or through the channel of his senses—then, without violence done to the constitution of his moral nature, may he die unto the present world, and live to the lovelier world that stands in the distance away from it.

## DISCOURSE X.

## THE RESTLESSNESS OF HUMAN AMBITION.

"How say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?—O that I had the wings of a dove, that I may fly away and be at rest."—PSALM xi. 1 and lv. 6.

To all those who are conversant in the scenery of external nature, it is evident that an object, to be seen to the greatest advantage, must be placed at a certain distance from the eye of the observer. The poor man's hut, though all within be raggedness and disorder, and all around it be full of the most nauseous and disgusting spectacles—yet, if seen at a sufficient distance, may appear a sweet and interesting cottage. That field where the thistle grows, and the face of which is deformed by the wild exuberance of a rank and pernicious vegetation, may delight the eye of a distant spectator by the loveliness of its verdure. That lake, whose waters are corrupted, and whose banks poison the air by their marshy and putrid exhalations, may charm the eye of an enthusiast, who views it from an adjoining eminence, and dwells with rapture on the quietness of its surface, and on the beauty of its outline—its sweet border fringed with the gayest colouring of nature, and on which spring lavishes its finest ornaments. All is the effect of distance. It softens the harsh and disgusting features of every object. What is gross and ordinary, it can dress in the most romantic attractions. The country hamlet it can transform into a paradise of beauty, in spite of the abominations that are at every door, and the angry brawlings of the men and the women who occupy it. All that is loathsome or offensive is softened down by the power of distance. We see the smoke rising in fantastic wreaths through the pure air, and the village spire peeping from among the thick verdure of the trees which embosom it. The fancy of our sentimentalist swells with pleasure, and peace and piety supply their delightful associations to complete the harmony of the picture.

This principle may serve to explain a feeling which some of us may have experienced. On a fine day, when the sun threw

its unclouded splendours over a whole neighbourhood, did we never form a wish that our place could be transferred to some distant and more beautiful part of the landscape? Did the idea never rise in our fancy, that the people who sport on yon sunny bank are happier than ourselves—that we should like to be buried in that distant grove, and forget, for a while, in silence and in solitude, the distractions of the world—that we should like to repose by yon beautiful rivulet, and soothe every anxiety of our heart by the gentleness of its murmurs—that we should like to transport ourselves to the distance of miles, and there enjoy the peace which resides in some sweet and sheltered concealment? In a word, was there no secret aspiration of the soul for another place than what we actually occupied? Instead of resting in the quiet enjoyment of our present situation, did not our wishes wander abroad and around us—and were not we ready to exclaim, with the Psalmist in the text, “O that I had the wings of a dove; for I would fly to yonder mountain, and be at rest”?

But what is of most importance to be observed is, that even when we have reached the mountain, rest is as far from us as ever. As we get nearer the wished-for spot, the fairy enchantments in which distance had arrayed it, gradually disappear; when we at last arrive at our object, the illusion is entirely dissipated; and we are grieved to find that we have carried the same principle of restlessness and discontent along with us.

Now, what is true of a natural landscape, is also true of that *moral landscape*, which is presented to the eye of the mind when it contemplates human life, and casts a wide survey over the face of human society. The position which I myself occupy is seen and felt with all its disadvantages. Its vexations come home to my feelings with all the certainty of experience. I see it before mine eyes with a vision so near and intimate, as to admit of no colouring, and to preclude the exercise of fancy. It is only in those situations which are without me, where the principle of deception operates, and where the vacancies of an imperfect experience are filled up by the power of imagination, ever ready to summon the fairest forms of pure and unmingled enjoyment. It is all resolvable, as before, into the principle of distance. I am too far removed to see the smaller features of the object which I contemplate. I overlook the operation of those minuter causes, which expose every situation of human life to the inroads of misery and disappointment. Mine eye can only take in the



broader outlines of the object before me ; and it consigns to fancy the task of filling them up with its finest colouring.

Am I unlearned ? I feel the disgrace of ignorance, and sigh for the name and the distinctions of philosophy. Do I stand upon a literary eminence ? I feel the vexations of rivalry, and could almost renounce the splendours of my dear-bought reputation for the peace and shelter which insignificance bestows. Am I poor ? I riot in fancy upon the gratifications of luxury, and think how great I would be, if invested with all the consequence of wealth and of patronage. Am I rich ? I sicken at the deceitful splendour which surrounds me ; and am at times tempted to think that I would have been happier far if, born to a humbler station, I had been trained to the peace and innocence of poverty. Am I immersed in business ? I repine at the fatigues of employment ; and envy the lot of those who have every hour at their disposal, and can spend all their time in the sweet relaxations of amusement and society. Am I exempted from the necessity of exertion ? I feel the corroding anxieties of indolence, and attempt in vain to escape that weariness and disgust which useful and regular occupation can alone save me from. Am I single ? I feel the dreariness of solitude, and my fancy warms at the conception of a dear and domestic circle. Am I embroiled in the cares of a family ? I am tormented with the perverseness or ingratitude of those around me ; and sigh in all the bitterness of repentance, over the rash and irrecoverable step by which I have renounced for ever the charms of independence.

This, in fact, is the grand principle of human ambition ; and it serves to explain both its restlessness and its vanity. What is present is seen in all its minuteness ; and we overlook not a single article in the train of little drawbacks, and difficulties, and disappointments. What is distant is seen under a broad and general aspect ; and the illusions of fancy are substituted in those places which we cannot fill up with the details of actual observation. What is present fills me with disgust. What is distant allures me to enterprise. I sigh for an office, the business of which is more congenial to my temper. I fix mine eye on some lofty eminence in the scale of preferment. I spurn at the condition which I now occupy, and I look around me and above me. The perpetual tendency is not to enjoy our actual position, but to get away from it—and not an individual amongst us who does not every day of his life join in the aspiration of the Psalmist,

“O that I had the wings of a dove, that I may fly to yonder mountain, and be at rest.”

But the truth is, that we never rest. The most regular and stationary being on the face of the earth has something to look forward to, and something to aspire after. He must realize that sum to which he annexes the idea of a competency. He must add that piece of ground which he thinks necessary to complete the domain of which he is the proprietor. He must secure that office which confers so much honour and emolument upon the holder. Even after every effort of personal ambition is exhausted, he has friends and children to provide for. The care of those who are to come after him, lands him in a never-ending train of hopes, and wishes, and anxieties. O that I could gain the vote and the patronage of this honourable acquaintance—or, that I could secure the political influence of that great man who honours me with an occasional call, and addressed me the other day with a cordiality which was quite bewitching—or that my young friend could succeed in his competition for the lucrative vacancy to which I have been looking forward for years, with all the eagerness which distance and uncertainty could inspire—or that we could fix the purposes of that capricious and unaccountable wanderer, who, of late indeed has been very particular in his attentions, and whose connexion we acknowledge, in secret, would be an honour and an advantage to our family—or, at all events, let me heap wealth and aggrandizement on that son who is to be the representative of my name, and is to perpetuate that dynasty which I have had the glory of establishing.

This restless ambition is not peculiar to any one class of society. A court only offers to one's notice a more exalted theatre for the play of rivalry and political enterprise. In the bosom of a cottage, we may witness the operation of the very same principle, only directed to objects of greater insignificance—and though a place for my girl, or an apprenticeship for my boy, be all that I aspire after, yet an enlightened observer of the human character will perceive in it the same eagerness of competition, the same jealousy, the same malicious attempts to undermine the success of a more likely pretender, the same busy train of passions and anxieties which animate the exertions of him who struggles for precedency in the cabinet, and lifts his ambitious eye to the management of an empire.

This is the universal property of our nature. In the whole

circle of our experience, did we ever see a man sit down to the full enjoyment of the present, without a hope or a wish unsatisfied? Did he carry in his mind no reference to futurity—no longing of the soul after some remote or inaccessible object—no day-dream which played its enchantments around him, and which, even when accomplished, left him nothing more than the delirium of a momentary triumph? Did we never see him after the bright illusions of novelty were over—when the present object had lost its charm, and the distant begun to practise its allurements—when some gay vision of futurity had hurried him on to a new enterprise, and in the fatigues of a restless ambition, he felt a bosom as oppressed with care, and a heart as anxious and dissatisfied as ever?

This is the true, though the curious, and we had almost said, the farcical picture of human life. Look into the heart which is the seat of feeling, and we there perceive a perpetual tendency to enjoyment, but not enjoyment itself—the cheerfulness of hope, but not the happiness of actual possession. The present is but an instant of time. The moment that we call it our own, it abandons us. It is not the actual sensation which occupies the mind. It is what is to come next. Man lives in futurity. The pleasurable feeling of the moment forms almost no part of his happiness. It is not the reality of to-day which interests his heart. It is the vision of to-morrow. It is the distant object on which fancy has thrown its deceitful splendour. When to-morrow comes, the animating hope is transformed into the dull and insipid reality. As the distant object draws near, it becomes cold, and tasteless, and uninteresting. The only way in which the mind can support itself, is by recurring to some new anticipation. This may give buoyancy for a time—but it will share the fate of all its predecessors, and be the addition of another folly to the wretched train of disappointments that have gone before it.

What a curious object of contemplation to a superior being, who casts an eye over this lower world, and surveys the busy, restless, and unceasing operations of the people who swarm upon its surface. Let him select any one individual amongst us, and confine his attention to him as a specimen of the whole. Let him pursue him through the intricate variety of his movements, for he is never stationary; see him with his eye fixed upon some distant object, and struggling to arrive at it; see him pressing forward to some eminence which perpetually recedes away from

him; see the inexplicable being, as he runs in full pursuit of some glittering bauble, and on the moment he reaches it throws it behind him, and it is forgotten; see him unmindful of his past experience, and hurrying his footsteps to some new object with the same eagerness and rapidity as ever; compare the ecstasy of hope with the lifelessness of possession, and observe the whole history of his day to be made up of one fatiguing race of vanity, and restlessness, and disappointment;

" And, like the glittering of an idiot's toy,  
Doth fancy mock his vows."

To complete the unaccountable history, let us look to its termination. Man is irregular in his movements, but this does not hinder the regularity of Nature. Time will not stand still to look at us. It moves at its own invariable pace. The winged moments fly in swift succession over us. The great luminaries which are suspended on high perform their cycles in the heaven. The sun describes his circuit in the firmament, and the space of a few revolutions will bring every man among us to his destiny. The decree passes abroad against the poor child of infatuation. It meets him in the full career of hope and of enterprise. He sees the dark curtain of mortality falling upon the world, and upon all its interests. That busy restless heart, so crowded with its plans, and feelings, and anticipations, forgets to play, and all its fluttering anxieties are hushed for ever.

Where then is that resting-place which the Psalmist aspired after? What are we to mean by that mountain, that wilderness, to which he prayed the wings of a dove may convey him, afar from the noise and distractions of the world, and hasten his escape from the windy storm and the tempest? Is there no object, in the whole round of human enjoyment, which can give rest to the agitated spirit of man—where he might sit down in the fulness of contentment, after he has reached it, and bid a final adieu to the cares and fatigues of ambition? Is this longing of the mind a principle of his nature, which no gratification can extinguish? Must it condemn him to perpetual agitation, and to the wild impulses of an ambition which is never satisfied?

We allow that exercise is the health of the mind. It is better to engage in a trifling pursuit, if innocent, than to watch the melancholy progress of time, and drag out a weary existence in all the languor of a consuming indolence. But nobody will deny, that it is better still if the pursuit in which we are engaged

be not a trifling one—if it conduct to some lasting gratification—if it lead to some object, the possession of which confers more happiness than the mere prospect—if the mere pleasure of the chase is not the only recompence—but where, in addition to this, we secure some reward proportioned to the fatigue of the exercise, and that justifies the eagerness with which we embarked in it. So long as the exercise is innocent, better do something than be idle: but better still, when the something we do leads to a valuable and important termination. Anything rather than the ignoble condition of that mind which feels the burden of itself, and which knows not how to dispose of the weary hours that hang so oppressively upon it. But there is certainly a ground of preference in the objects which invite us to exertion; and better far to fix upon that object which leaves happiness and satisfaction behind it, than dissipate our vigour in a pursuit which terminates in nothing, and where the mere pleasure of occupation is the only circumstance to recommend it. When we talk of the vanity of ambition, we do not propose to extinguish the principles of our nature, but to give them a more useful and exalted direction. A state of hope and of activity is the element of man; and all that we propose is, to withdraw his hope from the deceitful objects of fancy, and to engage his activity in the pursuit of real and permanent enjoyments.

Man must have an object to look forward to. Without this incitement the mind languishes. It is thrown out of its element; and, in this unnatural suspension of its powers, it feels a dreariness and a discomfort far more insufferable than it ever experienced from the visitations of a real or positive calamity. If such an object do not offer, he will create one for himself. The mere possession of wealth, and of all its enjoyments, will not satisfy him. Possession carries along with it the dulness of certainty; and to escape from this dulness, he will transform it into an uncertainty—he will embark it in a hazardous speculation, or he will stake it at the gaming-table; and from no other principle, than that he may exchange the listlessness of possession for the animating sensations of hope and of enterprise. It is a paradox in the moral constitution of man; but the experience of every day confirms it—that man follows what he knows to be a delusion, with as much eagerness as if he were assured of its reality. Put the question to him, and he will tell us, that if we were to lay before him all the profits which his fancy anticipates, he would long as much as ever for some new speculation; or, in

other words, be as much dissatisfied as ever with the position which he actually occupies—and yet, with his eye perfectly open to this circumstance, will he embark every power of his mind in the chase of what he knows to be a mockery and a phantom.

Now, to find fault with man for the pleasure which he derives from the mere excitement of a distant object, would be to find fault with the constitution of his nature. It is not the general principle of his activity which we condemn. It is the direction of that activity to a useless and unprofitable object. The mere happiness of the pursuit does not supersede the choice of the object. Even though we were to keep religion out of sight altogether, and bring the conduct of man to the test of worldly principles, we still presuppose a ground of preference in the object. Why is the part of the sober and industrious tradesman preferred to that of the dissipated traveller? Both feel the delights of a mind fully occupied with something to excite and to animate. But the exertions of the one lead to the safe enjoyment of a competency. The exertions of the other lead to an object which at best is precarious, and often land us in the horrors of poverty and disgrace. The mere pleasure of exertion is not enough to justify every kind of it: we must look forward to the object and the termination—and it is the judicious choice of the object which, even in the estimation of worldly wisdom, forms the great point of distinction betwixt prudence and folly. Now, all that we ask of you is, to extend the application of the same principle to a life of religion. Compare the wisdom of the children of light with the wisdom of a blind and worldly generation—the prudence of the Christian who labours for immortality, with the prudence of him who labours for the objects of a vain and perishable ambition. Contrast the littleness of time with the greatness of eternity—the restless and unsatisfying pleasures of the world with the enjoyments of heaven, so pure, so substantial, so unfading—and tell us which plays the higher game—he, all whose anxiety is frittered away on the pursuits of a scene that is ever shifting and ever transitory; or he who contemplates the life of man in all its magnitude, who acts upon the wide and comprehensive survey of its interests, and takes into his estimate the mighty roll of innumerable ages.

There is no resting-place to be found on this side of death. It is the doctrine of the Bible, and all experience loudly proclaims it. We do not ask you to listen to the complaints of the

poor, or the murmurs of the disappointed. Take your lesson from the veriest favourite of fortune. See him placed in a prouder eminence than he ever aspired after. See him arrayed in brighter colours than ever dazzled his early imagination. See him surrounded with all the homage that fame and flattery can bestow—and after you have suffered this parading exterior to practise its deceitfulness upon you, enter into his solitude—mark his busy, restless, dissatisfied eye, as it wanders uncertain on every object—enter into his mind, and tell me if repose or enjoyment be there—see him the poor victim of chagrin and disquietude—mark his heart as it nauseates the splendour which encompasses him—and tell us if you have not learned, in the truest and most affecting characters, that even in the full tide of a triumphant ambition “man labours for the meat which perisheth, and for the food which satisfieth not.”

What meaneth this restlessness of our nature? What meaneth this unceasing activity which longs for exercise and employment, even after every object is gained which first roused it to enterprise? What mean those unmeasurable longings, which no gratification can extinguish, and which still continue to agitate the heart of man even in the fulness of plenty and of enjoyment. If they mean anything at all, they mean that all which this world can offer is not enough to fill up his capacity for happiness—that time is too small for him, and he is born for something beyond it—that the scene of his earthly existence is too limited, and he is formed to expatiate in a wider and a grander theatre—that a nobler destiny is reserved for him—and that to accomplish the purpose of his being he must soar above the littleness of the world, and aim at a loftier prize.

It forms the peculiar honour and excellence of religion, that it accommodates to this property of our nature—that it holds out a prize suited to our high calling—that there is a grandeur in its objects which can fill and surpass the imagination—that it dignifies the present scene by connecting it with eternity—that it reveals to the eye of faith the glories of an imperishable world—and how, from the high eminences of heaven, a cloud of witnesses are looking down upon earth, not as a scene for the petty anxieties of time, but as a splendid theatre for the ambition of immortal spirits.

## DISCOURSE XI.

## ON THE ADVANTAGES OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE TO THE LOWER ORDERS OF SOCIETY.

“ Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished.”—ECCLESIASTES iv. 13.

THERE is no one topic on which the Bible, throughout the variety of its separate compositions, maintains a more lucid and entire consistency of sentiment, than the superiority of moral over all physical and all external distinctions. This lesson is frequently urged in the Old Testament, and as frequently reiterated in the New. There is a predominance given in both to worth, and to wisdom, and to principle, which leads us to understand, that within the compass of human attainment, there is an object placed before us of a higher and more estimable character than all the objects of a commonplace ambition—that wherever there is mind, there stands associated with it a nobler and more abiding interest than all the aggrandizements which wealth or rank can bestow—that within the limits of the moral and intellectual department of our nature, there is a commodity which money cannot purchase, and possesses a more sterling excellence than all which money can command. This preference of man viewed in his essential attributes, to man viewed according to the variable accessories by which he is surrounded—this preference of the subject to all its outward and contingent modifications—this preference of man viewed as the possessor of a heart, and of a spirit, and of capacities for truth and for righteousness, to man signalized by prosperity, and clothed in the pomp and in the circumstance of its visible glories—this is quite akin with the superiority which the Bible everywhere ascribes to the soul over the body, and to eternity over time, and to the Supreme Author of Being over all that is subordinate and created. It marks a discernment, unclouded by all those associations which are so current and have so fatal an ascendancy in our world—the wisdom of a purer and more ethereal region than the one we occupy



—the unpolluted clearness of a light shining in a dark place, which announces its own coming to be from above, and gives every spiritual reader of the Bible to perceive the beaming of a powerful and presiding intelligence in all its pages.

One very animating inference to be drawn from our text, is how much may be made of humanity. Did a king come to take up his residence amongst us—did he shed a grandeur over our city by the presence of his court, and give the impulse of his expenditure to the trade of its population—it were not easy to rate the value and the magnitude which such an event would have on the estimation of a common understanding, or the degree of personal importance which would attach to him, who stood a lofty object in the eye of admiring townsmen. And yet it is possible, out of the raw and ragged materials of an obscurest lane, to rear an individual of more inherent worth than him who thus draws the gaze of the world upon his person. By the act of training in wisdom's ways the most tattered and neglected boy who runs upon our pavements, do we present the community with that which, in wisdom's estimation, is of greater price than this gorgeous inhabitant of a palace. And when one thinks how such a process may be multiplied among the crowded families that are around us—when one thinks of the extent and the density of that mine of moral worth, which retires and deepens and accumulates behind each front of the street along which we are passing—when one tries to compute the quantity of spirit that is imbedded in the depth and the frequency of these human habitations, and reflects of this native ore, that more than the worth of a monarch may be stamped, by instruction, on each separate portion of it—a field is thus opened for the patriotism of those who want to give an augmented value to the produce of our land, which throws into insignificance all the enterprises of vulgar speculation. Commerce may flourish, or may fail—and amid the ruin of her many fluctuations, may elevate a few of the more fortunate of her sons to the affluence of princes. Thy merchants may be princes, and thy traffickers be the honourable of the earth. But if there be truth in our text, there may, on the very basis of human society, and by a silent process of education, materials be formed, which far outweigh in cost and true dignity, all the blazing pinnacles that glitter upon its summit—and it is indeed a cheering thought to the heart of a philanthropist, that near him lies a territory so ample on which he may expatiate—where for all his pains, and all his sacrifices,

he is sure of a repayment more substantial than was ever wafted by richly laden flotilla to our shores—where the return comes to him, not in that which superficially decks the man, but in a solid increment of value fixed and perpetuated on the man himself—where additions to the worth of the soul form the proceeds of his productive operation—and where, when he reckons up the profits of his enterprise, he finds them to consist of that which, on the highest of all authorities, he is assured to be more than meat, of that which is greatly more than raiment.

Even without looking beyond the confines of our present world, the virtue of humble life will bear to be advantageously contrasted with all the pride and glory of an elevated condition. The man who, though among the poorest of them all, has a wisdom and a weight of character, which makes him the oracle of his neighbourhood—the man who, vested with no other authority than the meek authority of worth, carries in his presence a power to shame and to overawe the profligacy that is around him—the venerable father, from whose lowly tenement the voice of psalms is heard to ascend with the offering up of every evening sacrifice—the Christian sage, who, exercised among life's severest hardships, looks calmly onward to heaven, and trains the footsteps of his children in the way that leads to it—the eldest of a well-ordered family, bearing their duteous and honourable part in the contest with its difficulties and its trials—all these offer to our notice such elements of moral respectability, as do exist among the lowest orders of human society, and elements, too, which admit of being multiplied far beyond the reach of any present calculation. And while we hold nothing to be more unscriptural than the spirit of a factious discontent with the rulers of our land—while we feel nothing to be more untasteful than the insolence of a vulgar disdain towards men of rank, or men of opulence—yet should the king upon the throne be taught to understand that there is a dignity of an intrinsically higher order than the dignity of birth or of power—a dignity which may be seen to sit with gracefulness on the meanest of his subjects—and which draws from the heart of the beholder a truer and profounder reverence.

So that, were it for nothing more than to bless and adorn our present state, there cannot be an attempt of greater promise, than that of extending education among the throng of our peasantry—there cannot be a likelier way of filling the country with beauteous and exalted spectacles—there cannot be a readier

method of pouring a glory over the face of our land, than that of spreading the wisdom of life, and the wisdom of principle, throughout the people who live in it—a glory differing in kind, but greatly higher in degree, than the glories of common prosperity. It is well that the progress of knowledge is now looked to by politicians without alarm—that the ignorance of the poor is no longer regarded as more essential to the devotion of their patriotism, than it is to the devotion of their piety—that they have at length found that the best way of disarming the lower orders of all that is threatening and tumultuous, is not to enthrall, but to enlighten them—that the progress of truth among them, instead of being viewed with dismay, is viewed with high anticipation—and an impression greatly more just, and greatly more generous, is now beginning to prevail, that the strongest rampart which can possibly be thrown around the cause of public tranquillity, consists of a people raised by information, and graced by all moral and all Christian accomplishments.

For our own part, we trust that the mighty interval of separation between the higher and lower orders of our community, will at length be broken down, not by any inroad of popular violence—not by the fierce and devouring sweep of any revolutionary tempest—not even by any new adjustment, either of the limits of power, or the limits of property—not, in short, as the result of any battle, fought either on the arena of war, or on the arena of politics—but as the fruit of that gradual equalization in mind and in manners, to which even now a sensible approach is already making on the part of our artizans and our labourers. They are drawing towards an equality, and on that field, too, in which equality is greatly most honourable. And we fondly hope that the time is coming, when, in frank and frequent intercourse, we shall behold the ready exchange of confidence on the one side, and affection on the other—when the rich and the poor shall love each other more, just because they know each other more—when each party shall recognise the other to be vastly worthier of regard and of reverence than is now apprehended—when, united by the sympathies of a common hope, and a common nature, and on a perfect level in all that is essential and characteristic of humanity, they shall at length learn to live in love and peacefulness together, as the expectants of one common heaven—as the members of one common and rejoicing family.

But, to attain a just estimate of the superiority of the poor man who has wisdom, over the rich man who has it not, we

must enter into the calculation of eternity—we must look to wisdom in its true essence, as consisting of religion, as having the fear of God for its beginning, and the rule of God for its way, and the favour of God for its full and satisfying termination—we must compute how speedily it is, that, on the wings of time, the season of every paltry distinction between them must at length pass away; how soon death will strip the one of his rags, and the other of his pageantry, and send them in utter nakedness to the dust; how soon judgment will summon them from their graves, and place them in outward equality before the great disposer of their future lot, and their future place, through ages which never end; how in that situation, the accidental distinctions of life will be rendered void, and personal distinctions will be all that shall avail them; how, when examined by the secrets of the inner man, and the deeds done in their body, the treasure of heaven shall be adjudged only to him whose heart was set upon it in this world; and how tremendously the account between them will be turned, when it shall be found of the one, that he must perish for lack of knowledge, and of the other, that he has the wisdom which is unto salvation.

And here it is of importance to remark, that to be wise as a Christian is wise, it is not essential to have that higher scholarship which wealth alone can purchase—that such is the peculiar adaptation of the gospel to the poor, that it may be felt in the full force of its most powerful evidence by the simplest of its hearers—that to be convinced of its truth, all which appears necessary is, to have a perception of sin through the medium of the conscience, and a perception of the suitableness of the offered Saviour through the medium of a revelation, plain in its terms, and obviously sincere and affectionate in its calls. Philosophy does not melt the conscience. Philosophy does not make luminous that which in itself is plain. Philosophy does not bring home, with greater impression upon the heart, the symptoms of honesty and good-will which abound in the New Testament. Prayer may do it. Moral earnestness may do it. The Spirit, given to those who ask Him, may shine with the light of His demonstration on the docility of those little children, who are seeking, with their whole hearts, the way of peace, and long to have their feet established on the paths of righteousness. There is a learning, the sole fruit of which is a laborious deviation from the truth as it is in Jesus. And there is a learning which reaches no farther than to the words in which that truth is an-

nounced, and yet reaches far enough to have that truth brought home with power upon the understanding—a learning, the sole achievement of which is to read the Bible, and yet by which the scholar is conducted to that hidden wisdom which is his light in life, and his passport to immortality—a learning, which hath simply led the inquirer's way to that place where the Holy Ghost hath descended upon him in rich effusion, and which, as he was reading, in his own tongue, the wonderful words of God, hath given them such a weight and such a clearness in his eyes, that they have become to him the words whereby he shall be saved. And thus it is, that in many a cottage of our land, there is a wisdom which is reviled, or unknown, in many of our halls of literature—there is the candle of the Lord shining in the hearts of those who fear Him—there is a secret revealed unto babes, which is hidden from the wise and the prudent—there is an eye which discerns, and a mind that is well exercised on the mysteries of the sure and the well-ordered covenant—there is a sense and a feeling of the preciousness of that cross, the doctrine of which is foolishness to those who perish—there is a ready apprehension of that truth, which is held at nought by many rich, and many mighty, and many noble, who will not be admonished—but which makes these poor to be rich in faith, and heirs of that kingdom which God hath prepared for those who love Him.

We know not if any who is now present has ever felt the charm of an act of intercourse with a Christian among the poor—with one whose chief attainment is that he knows the Bible to be true—and that his heart, touched and visited by a consenting movement to its doctrine, feels it to be precious. We shall be disappointed if the very exterior of such a man do not bear the impress of that worth and dignity which have been stamped upon his character—if, in the very aspect and economy of his household, the traces of his superiority are not to be found—if the promise, even of the life that now is, be not conspicuously realized on the decent sufficiency of his means, and the order of his well-conditioned family—if the eye of tasteful benevolence be not regaled by the symptoms of comfort and cheerfulness which are to be seen in his lowly habitation. And we shall be greatly disappointed, if after having survived the scoff of companions, and run through the ordeal of nature's enmity, he do not earn, as the fruits of the good confession that he witnesses among his neighbours, the tribute of a warm and willing

cordiality from them all—if, while he lives, he do not stand the first in estimation, and when he dies, the tears and acknowledgments of acquaintances, as well as of kinsfolk, do not follow him to his grave—if, even in the hearts of the most unholy around him, an unconscious testimony is not borne to the worth of holiness, so as to make even this world's honour one of the ingredients in the portion of the righteous. But these are the mere tokens and visible accompaniments of Christian excellence—the passing efflorescence of a growth that is opening and maturing for eternity. To behold this excellence in all its depth, and in all its solidity, you must examine his mind, and there see the vastly higher elements with which it is conversant, than those among which the children of this world are grovelling—there see, how, in the hidden walk of the inner man, he treads a more elevated path than is trodden either by the daughters of gaiety, or the sons of ambition—there see, how the whole greatness and imagery of heaven are present to his thoughts, and what a reach and nobleness of conception have gathered upon his soul, by his daily approaches to heaven's sanctuary. He lives in a cottage—and yet he is a king and priest unto God. He is fixed for life to the ignoble drudgery of a workman, and yet he is on the full march to a blissful immortality. He is a child in the mysteries of science, but familiar with greater mysteries. That preaching of the cross, which is foolishness to others, he feels to be the power of God, and the wisdom of God. That faithfulness which annexes to all the promises of the gospel—that righteousness which is unto the believer—that fulness in Christ, out of which the supplies of light and of strength are ever made to descend on the prayers of all who put their trust in Him—that wisdom of principle, and wisdom of application, by which, through his spiritual insight into his Bible, he is enabled both to keep his heart, and to guide the movements of his history—these are his treasures—these are the elements of that moral wealth, by which he is far exalted above the monarch who stalks his little hour of magnificence on earth, and then descends a ghost of departed greatness into the land of condemnation. He is rich, just because the word of Christ dwells in him richly in all wisdom. He is great, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon him.

So that the same conclusion comes back upon us with mightier emphasis than before. If a poor child be capable of being thus transformed, how it should move the heart of a city philanthropist, when he thinks of the amazing extent of raw material

for this moral and spiritual manufacture that is on every side of him—when he thinks, that in going forth on some Christian enterprise among a population, he is in truth walking among the rudiments of a state that is to be everlasting—that out of their most loathsome and unseemly abodes, a glory can be extracted which will weather all the storms and all the vicissitudes of this world's history—that, in the filth and raggedness of a hovel, that is to be found, on which all the worth of heaven, as well as all the endurance of heaven can be imprinted—that he is, in a word, dealing in embryo with the elements of a great and future empire, which is to rise, indestructible and eternal, on the ruins of all that is earthly, and every member of which shall be a king and a priest for evermore.

And before I pass on to the application of these remarks, let me just state, that the great instrument for thus elevating the poor, is that gospel of Jesus Christ, which may be preached unto the poor. It is the doctrine of His cross finding an easier admission into their hearts, than it does through those barriers of human pride, and human resistance, which are often reared on the basis of literature. Let the testimony of God be simply taken in, that on His own Son He has laid the iniquities of us all—and from this point does the humble scholar of Christianity pass into light, and enlargement, and progressive holiness. On the reception of this great truth, there hinges the emancipation of his heart from a thralldom which represses all the spiritual energies of those who live without hope, and, therefore, live without God in the world. It is guilt—it is the sense of his awakened and unexpiated guilt, which keeps man at so wide a distance from the God whom he has offended. Could some method be devised, by which God, jealous of His honour, and man jealous of his safety, might be brought together on a firm ground of reconciliation—it would translate the sinner under a new moral influence, to the power of which, and the charm of which he before was utterly impracticable. Jesus Christ died, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God. This is a truth, which when all the world shall receive it, all the world will be renovated. Many do not see how a principle, so mighty in operation, should be enveloped in a proposition so simple of utterance. But let a man, by his faith in this utterance, come to know that God is his friend, and that heaven is the home of his fondest expectation; and in contact with such new elements as these, he will evince the reach, and the habit, and the desire of

a new creature. It is this doctrine which is the alone instrument of God for the moral transformation of our species. When every demonstration from the chair of philosophy shall fail, this will achieve its miracles of light and virtue among the people; and however infidelity may now deride—or profaneness may now lift her appalling voice upon our streets—or licentiousness may now offer her sickening spectacles—or moral worthlessness may have now deeply tainted the families of our outcast and long-neglected population—however unequal may appear the contest with the powers and the principles of darkness—yet let not the teachers of righteousness abandon it in despair; God will bring forth judgment unto victory, and on the triumphs of the word of His own testimony, will He usher in the glory of the latter days.

There is one kind of institution that never has been set up in a country, without deceiving and degrading its people; and another kind of institution that never has been set up in a country, without raising both the comfort and the character of its families. We leave it to the policy of our sister kingdom, by the pomp and the pretension of her charities, to disguise the wretchedness which she cannot do away. The glory of Scotland lies in her schools. Out of the abundance of her moral and literary wealth, that wealth which communication cannot dissipate—that wealth which its possessor may spread and multiply among thousands, and yet be as affluent as ever—that wealth which grows by competition, instead of being exhausted—this is what, we trust, she will be ever ready to bestow on all her people. Silver and gold she may have none—but such as she has she will give—she will send them to school. She cannot make pensioners of them—but will, if they like, make scholars of them. She will give them of that food by which she nurses and sustains all her offspring—by which she renders wise the very poorest of her children—by which, if there be truth in our text, she puts into many a single cottager, a glory surpassing that of the mightiest potentates in our world. To hold out any other boon, is to hold out a promise which she and no country in the universe can ever realize—it is to decoy, and then most wretchedly to deceive—it is to put on a front of invitation, by which numbers are allured to hunger, and nakedness, and contempt. It is to spread a table, and to hang out such signals of hospitality, as draw around it a multitude expecting to be fed, and who find that they must famish over a scanty entertainment. A system



replete with practical mischief, can put on the semblance of charity, even as Satan, the father of all lying and deceitful promises, can put on the semblance of an angel of light. But we trust, that the country in which we live will ever be preserved from the cruelty of its tender mercies—that she will keep by her schools, and her Scriptures, and her moralizing process; and that, instead of vainly attempting so to force the exuberance of nature, as to meet and satisfy the demands of a population whom she has led astray, she will make it her constant aim so to exalt her population, as to establish every interest that belongs to them, on the foundation of their own worth and their own capabilities—that taunted, as she has been, by her contemptuous neighbour, for the poverty of her soil, she will at least prove, by deed and by example, that it is fitted to sustain an erect, and honourable, and high-minded peasantry; and leaving England to enjoy the fatness of her own fields, and a complacency with her own institutions, that we shall make a clean escape from her error, and never again be entangled therein—that unsexed by the false lights of a mistaken philanthropy, and mistaken patriotism, we shall be enabled to hold on in the way of our ancestors; to ward off every near and threatening blight from the character of our beloved people; and so to labour with the manhood of the present, and the boyhood of the coming generation, as to enrich our land with that wisdom which is more precious than gold, and that righteousness which exalteth a kingdom.

## DISCOURSE XII.

ON THE DUTY AND THE MEANS OF CHRISTIANIZING OUR HOME POPULATION.

“ And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.—MARK xvi. 15.

CHRISTIANITY proceeds upon the native indisposition of the human heart to its truths and its lessons—and all its attempts for the establishment of itself in the world are made upon this principle. It never expects that men will, of their own accord, originate that movement by which they are to come in contact with the faith of the gospel—and, therefore, instead of waiting till they shall move towards the gospel, it has been provided, from the first, that the gospel shall move towards them. The apostles did not set up their stationary college at Jerusalem, in the hope of embassies from a distance to inquire after the recent and wondrous revelation that had broke upon the world. But they had to go forth, and to preach among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And, in like manner, it never was looked for, that men, in the ardour of their curiosity, or desire after the way of salvation, were to learn the language of the apostles, that they might come and hear of it at their mouth. But the apostles were miraculously gifted with the power of addressing all in their own native language—and when thus furnished, they went actively and aggressively about among them. It is nowhere supposed that the demand for Christianity is spontaneously, and in the first instance, to arise among those who are not Christians; but it is laid upon those who are Christians, to go abroad, and, if possible, to awaken out of their spiritual lethargy, those who are fast asleep in that worldliness which they love, and from which, without some external application, there is no rational prospect of ever arousing them. The dead mass will not quicken into sensibility of itself—and, therefore, unless some cause of fermentation be brought to it from without, will it remain in all the sluggishness of its original nature. For there is an utter diversity between the article of Christian instruction, and the

articles of ordinary merchandise. For the latter there is a demand, to which men are natively and originally urged by hunger or by thirst, or by the other physical sensations and appetites of their constitution. For the former there is no natural appetite. It is just as necessary to create a spiritual hunger, as it is to afford a spiritual refreshment—and so from the very first do we find, that for the spread of Christianity in the world, there had to be not an itinerancy on the part of inquirers, but a busy, active, and extended itinerancy on the part of its advocates and its friends.

Now, those very principles which were so obviously acted on at the beginning, are also the very principles that, in all ages of the church, have characterized its evangelizing processes. The Bible Society is now doing, by ordinary means, what was done by the miracle of tongues in the days of the apostles—enabling the people of all nations to read each in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God. And the Missionary Societies are sending forth, not inspired apostles gifted with tongues, but the expounders of apostolical doctrine, learned in tongues, over the face of the globe. They do not presume upon such a taste for the gospel in heathen lands, as that the people there shall traverse seas and continents, or shall set themselves down to the laborious acquisition of some Christian language, that they might either have access to Scripture, or the ability of converse with men that are skilled in the mysteries of the faith. But this taste which they do not find, they expect to create—and for this purpose is there now an incessant application to Pagan countries, of means and instruments from without—and many are the lengthened and the hazardous journeys which have been undertaken—and voyages of splendid enterprise have recently been crowned with splendid moral achievements; insomuch, that even the ferocity and licentiousness of the savage character have given way under the power of the truth; and lands, that within the remembrance of many now alive, rankled with the worst abominations of idolatry, have now exchanged them for the arts and the decencies of civilization; for village schools, and Christian sabbaths, and venerable pastors, who first went forth as missionaries, and, as the fruits of their apostolic labour, among these outcast wanderers, can now rejoice over holy grandsires, and duteous children, and all that can gladden the philanthropic eye, in the peace, and purity, and comfort of pious families.

Now, amid the splendour and the interest of these more con-

spicuous operations, it is often not adverted to, how much work of a missionary character is indispensable for perpetuating, and still more for extending Christianity at home—how families, within the distance of half-a-mile, may lapse, without observation or sympathy on our part, into a state of practical heathenism—how, within less than an hour's walk, hundreds may be found, who morally and spiritually live at as wide a separation from the Gospel, and all its ordinances, as do the barbarians of another continent—how, in many of our crowded recesses, the families, which, out of sight, and out of Christian sympathy, have accumulated there, might, at length, sink and settle down into a listless, and lethargic, and, to all appearance, impracticable population—leaving the Christian teacher as much to do with them, as has the first missionary when he touches on a yet unbroken shore. It is vain to expect, that by a proper and primary impulse originating with themselves, those aliens from Christianity will go forth on the inquiry after it. The messengers of Christianity must go forth upon them. Many must go to and fro amongst the streets, and the lanes, and those deep intricacies, that teem with human life, to an extent far beyond the eye or imagination of the unobservant passenger, if we are to look for the increase either of a spiritual taste, or of scriptural knowledge among the families. That mass which is so dense of mind, and, therefore, so dense of immortality, must be penetrated in the length and in the breadth of it; and then many will be found, who, however small their physical distance from the sound of the Gospel, stand at as wide a moral distance therefrom, as do the children of the desert—and to overpass *this* barrier, to send out upon this outfield, such ministrations as might reclaim its occupiers to the habits and the observations of a Christian land, to urge and obtrude, as it were, upon the notice of thousands, what, without such an advancement, not one of them might have moved a footstep in quest of—these are so many approximations, that, to all intents and purposes, have in them the character—and might, with the blessing of God, have also the effect—of a missionary enterprise.

When we are commanded to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, our imagination stretches forth beyond the limits of Christendom; and we advert not to the millions who are within these limits, nay, within the sight of Christian temples, and the sound of Sabbath bells, yet who never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They live to manhood, and

to old age, deplorably ignorant of the way of salvation; and in ignorance, too, not the less deplorable that it is wilful. It is this which so fearfully aggravates their guilt, that, on the very confines of light, they remain in darkness; and thereby prove, that it is a darkness which they love, and which they choose to persist in. Thus it will be found more tolerable for the heathen abroad, than for the heathen at home—and therefore it is, that for the duty of our text, the wilds of Pagan idolatry, or of Mahometan delusion, are not the only theatres—that for its full performance, it is not enough that we equip the missionary vessel, and go in quest of untaught humanity at a distance, and hold converse with the men of other climes, and of other tongues, and rear on some barbarous shore the Christianized village, as an outpost in that spiritual warfare, by which we hope at length to banish depravity and guilt, even from the farthest extremities of our species. These are noble efforts, and altogether worthy of being extended and multiplied a hundred-fold. But they are not the only efforts of Christian philanthropy—nor can they be sustained as a complete discharge from the obligation of preaching the Gospel to every creature under heaven. For the accomplishment of this, there must not only be a going forth on the vast and untrodden spaces that are without; there must be a filling up of the numerous and peopled vacancies that are within—a busy, internal locomotion, that might circulate, and disperse, and branch off to the right and to the left, among the many thousand families which are at hand: And thoroughly to pervade these families; to make good a lodgment in the midst of them, for the nearer or the more frequent ministrations of Christianity than before; to have gained welcome for the Gospel testimony into their houses, and, in return, to have drawn any of them forth to attendance on the place of Sabbath and of solemn services—this, also, is to act upon our text, this is to do the part, and to render one of the best achievements of a missionary.

“How can they believe,” says Paul, “without a preacher? and how can they preach except they be sent?” To make sure this process, there must be a juxtaposition between him who declares the word and them who are addressed by it—but to make good this juxtaposition, the apostle never imagines that alienated man is, of his own accord, to move towards the preacher—and, therefore, that the preacher must be sent, or must move towards him. And, perhaps, it has not been adverted

to, that in the very first steps of this approximation, there is an encouragement for going onward, and for plying the families of a city population with still nearer and more besetting urgencies than before. It is not known how much the very juxtaposition of an edifice for worship tells upon the church-going habit of the contiguous householders—how many there are who will not move at the sound of a distant bell, that with almost mechanical sureness will go forth, and mingle with the stream of passengers, who are crowding the way to a place that is at hand—how children, lured perhaps at the first by curiosity, are led so to reiterate their attendance, as to be landed in a most precious habit for youth and for manhood—how this tendency spreads by talk, and sympathy, and imitation, through each little vicinity; and thus, in groups, or in clusters, might adjoining families be gained over to the ordinances of religion—how the leaven, when once set a-going, might spread by the fermentation of converse, and mutual sentiment, through the whole lump; till over the face of a whole city department, the Christian fabric which stands conspicuously in the midst of it, and whither its people are rung every Sabbath to the ministrations of the Gospel, might come to be its place of general repair; and attendance there be at length proceeded on as one of the decencies of its established observation. Some of the influences in this process may appear slight or fanciful to the superficial eye—and yet they are known, and familiarly known, to be of powerful operation. You must surely be aware, that it makes all the practical difference in the world, to the retail and custom even of an ordinary shop, should it deviate, by a very small hairbreadth from the minutest convenience of the public—should it retire by ever so little from the busy pavement, or have to be ascended by two or three steps, or require the slightest turn and change of direction from that beaten path which passengers do inveterately walk in. And human nature on a week-day, is human nature on the Sabbath. There is no saying on how slight or trivial a circumstance it may be made to turn; and odd as the illustration may appear, we feel confident that we have not, at present, either a profound or a pious hearer, who will undervalue one single stepping-stone by which a hearer more might be brought to the house of God—who will despise any of the means, however humble, that bring a human creature within the reach of that word which is able to sanctify and save him—who will forget the wonted style of God's administrations, by which, on

these minutest incidents of life, the greatest events of history are oft suspended—or, who will deny that the same Being, who, by the flight of a single bird, turned the pursuers of Mahomet away from him, and so spared the instrument by which a gross and grievous superstition hath found an ascendancy over millions of immortal spirits, that He can enlist in the cause of His own Son, even the least and slightest familiarities of human practice; and, with links which in themselves are exceeding small, can fasten and uphold the chain which runs through the earthly pilgrimage of man, and reaches to his eternity.

But after all, though local conveniency may allure, in the first instance, to the house of God, local conveniency will not detain the attendance of multitudes, unless there be a worth and a power in the services which are rendered there—unless there be a moral earnestness in the heart of the preacher, which may pour forth a sympathy with itself through the hearts of a listening congregation—unless, acquitting himself as an upright minister of the New Testament, he expound with faithfulness, and some degree of energy, those truths which are unto salvation; and so distribute among his fellow-sinners, the alone substantial and satisfying food of the soul—unless such a demonstration be given of the awful realities in which we deal, as to awaken in many bosoms the realizing sense of death, and of the judgment-seat—and, above all, unless the demands of the law, with its accompanying severities and terrors, be so urged on the conviction of guilty man, as to make it fall with welcome upon his ear, when told that unto him a Saviour has been born. These are the alone elements of a rightful and well-earned popularity. Eloquence may dazzle—and argument may compel the homage of its intellectual admirers—and fashion may even, when these are wanting, sustain through its little hour of smile and of sunshine, a complacent attendance on the reigning idol of the neighbourhood—but it is only if armed with the panoply of scriptural truth, that there will gather and adhere to him a people who hunger for the bread of life, and who make a business of their eternity. To fill the church well, we must fill the pulpit well; and see that the articles of the peace-speaking blood, and the sanctifying Spirit, are the topics that be dearest to the audience, and on which the Christian orator who addresses them most loves to expatiate. These form the only enduring staple of good and vigorous preaching; and unless they have a breadth, and a prominence, and a fond reiteration in the sermons

that shall be delivered from the place where we now stand,\* they either will not, or ought not to be listened to.

Yet grieved and disappointed should we be, did he confine himself to Sabbath ministrations—did he not go forth, and become the friend and the Christian adviser of all who dwell within the limits of his vineyard—did he not act the part of an apostle among you, from house to house, and vary the fatigue of his preparations for the pulpit, by a daily walk amongst the ignorant, or the sick, or the sorrowful, or the dying. It is your part to respect, as you would a sanctuary, that solitude to which, for hours together, he should commit himself, in the work of meditating the truths of salvation—and it is his part to return your delicacy by his labours of love, by the greetings of his cordial fellowship, by his visits of kindness. It is a wrong imagination on the side of a people, when they look on the Sabbath for a vigorous exposition of duty or doctrine from him whom they tease, and interrupt, and annoy, through the week—and it is a wrong imagination on the side of a pastor, when, looking on the church as the sole arena of his usefulness, he does not relax the labour of a spirit that has been much exercised on the great topics of the Christian ministry, by frequent and familiar intercourse among those whom, perhaps, he has touched or arrested by his Sabbath demonstrations. You ought to intrude not upon his arrangements and his studies; but he ought, in these arrangements, to provide the opportunities of ample converse with every spiritual patient, with every honest inquirer. You should be aware of the distinction that he makes between that season of the day which is set apart for retirement, and that season of the day which lies open to the duty of holding courteous fellowship with all—and of hiding not himself from his own flesh. It is the gross insensibility which obtains to the privileges both of a sacred and literary order—it is the disturbance of a perpetual inroad on that prophet's chamber, which ought at all times to be a safe retreat of contemplation—it is the incessant struggle that must be made for a professional existence, with irksome application, and idle ceremony, and even the urgencies of friendship—these are sufficient to explain those pulpit imbecilities of which many are heard to complain, while themselves they help to create them. And therefore if you want to foster the energies of your future clergyman; if you would co-operate

\* This Sermon was preached at the opening of a city chapel, which has a local district assigned to it, and whose rule of seat-letting is on the territorial principle.



with him in those mental labours, by which he provides through the week for the repast of your Sabbath festival ; if it is your desire that an unction and a power shall be felt in all his pulpit ministrations ; if here you would like to catch a glow of heaven's sacredness, and receive that fresh and forcible impulse upon your spirits, which might send you forth again with a redoubled ardour of holy affection and zeal on the business of life, and make you look and long for the coming Sabbath, as another delightful resting-place on your journey towards Zion—then suffer him to breathe without molestation, in that pure and lofty region where he might inhale a seraphic fervency, by which to kindle among his hearers his own celestial fire, his own noble enthusiasm. If it be this, and not the glee of companionship, or the drudgeries of ordinary clerkship that you want from your minister, then leave, I beseech you, his time in his own hand, and hold his asylum to be inviolable.

But we trust that from this asylum his excursions will be frequent—and sure we are, that nought but an affectionate forth-going is necessary on his part, that he may have a warm and a willing reception upon yours. It is utterly a mistake that any population, whatever be their present habits, will discourage the approaches of a Christian minister to their families. It is a particularly wrong imagination, that in cities there is a hard or an insolent defiance among the labouring classes, which no assiduities of service or of good-will on the part of their clergyman can possibly overcome. Let him but try what their temperament is in this matter, and he will find it in every way as courteous and inviting as among the most primitive of our Scottish peasantry. Let him be but alert to every call of threatening disease among his people, and the ready attendant upon every deathbed—let him ply not his fatiguing, but his easy and most practicable rounds of visitation in the midst of them—let him be zealous for their best interests, and not in the spirit of a fawning obsequiousness, but in that of a manly, intelligent, and honest friendship, let him stand forth as the guardian of the poor, the guide and the counsellor of their children ; it is positively not in human nature to withstand the charm and the power which lie in such unwearied ministrations—and if visibly prompted by the affinity that there is in the man's heart for his fellows of the species, there will, by a law of the human constitution, be an affinity in theirs towards him, which they cannot stifle, though they would ; and they will have no wish to stifle it.

It is to this principle, little as it has been recognised, and still less as it has been proceeded on, it is to this that we confide the gathering at length of a congregation within these walls, and that, too, from the vicinities by which we are immediately surrounded. That the chapel will be filled at the very outset, from the district which has been assigned to it, we have no expectation. But we do fondly hope, as the fruit of his unwearied services, that its minister will draw the kind regards of the people after him; that an impression will be made by his powerful and reiterated addresses in the bosom of their families, which may not stop there; that the man who prays at every funeral, and sits by every dying bed, and seizes every opening for Christian usefulness that is afforded to him by the visitations of Providence on the houses of the surrounding neighbourhood, and who, while a fit companion for the great in his vineyard, is a ready, and ever accessible friend to the poorest of them all—it is utterly impossible that such a man, after his work of varied and active benevolence, will have nought to address on the Sabbath but empty walls. After being the eye-witness of what he does, there will spring up a most natural desire, and that cannot be resisted, to hear what he says. It is not yet known how much such attentions as these, kept up, and made to play in busy and constant recurrence upon one local neighbourhood—it is not yet known how much and how powerfully they tell in drawing the hearts of the people towards him who faithfully, and with honest friendship, discharges them. They will make the pulpit which he fills a common centre of attraction to the whole territory over which he expatiates—and we need not that we may see exemplified in human society, the worth and importance of the pastoral relationship, we need not go alone among the sequestered vales, or the far and upland retreats of our country parishes. It is not a local phenomenon dependent on geography. It is a general one, dependent on the nature of man; on those laws of the heart, which no change of place or of circumstances can obliterate. To gain the moral ascendancy of which we speak, it is enough if the upright and laborious clergyman have human feelings and human families on every side of him. It signifies not where. Give him Christian kindness, and this will pioneer a way for him amongst all the varieties of place and of population. Beside the smoke, and the din, and the dizzying wheel of crowded manufactories, will he find as ready an introduction for himself and for his office, as if his

only walk had been among peaceful hamlets, and with nought but the romance and the rusticity of nature spread out before him. It is utterly a wrong imagination, and in the face both of experience and of prophecy, that in towns there is an impracticable barrier against the capabilities and the triumphs of the Gospel—that in towns the cause of human amelioration must be abandoned in despair—that in towns it is not by the architecture of chapels, but by the architecture of prisons, and of barracks, and of bridewells, we are alone to seek for the protection of society—that elsewhere a moralizing charm may go forth among the people, from village schools and Sabbath services, but that there is a hardihood and a ferocity in towns which must be dealt with in another way, and against which all the artillery of the pulpit is feeble as infancy—that a foul and a feverish depravity has settled there, which no spiritual application will ever extinguish : For amid all the devisings for the peace and order of our community, do we find it to be the shrewd and sturdy apprehension of many, that all which can be achieved in our overgrown cities, is by the strength of the secular arm ; that a stern and vigorous police will do more for public morals, than a whole band of ecclesiastics ; that a periodical execution will strike a more salutary terror into the hearts of the multitude, than do the dreadest fulminations of the preacher's voice—and this will explain the derision and the distrust wherewith that argument is listened to, which goes to set forth the efficacy of Christian doctrine, or to magnify the office of him who delivers it.

We can offer no computation that will satisfy such antagonists as these, of the importance of Christianity even to the civil and the temporal well-being of our species ; and we shall, therefore, plead the authority of our text, for extending its lessons to every creature—for going forth with it to every haunt and every habitation where immortal beings are to be found—for not merely carrying it beyond the limits of Christendom, but for filling up with instruction the many blank, and vacant, and still unoccupied places, teeming with population, that even within these limits have not been overtaken. What ! shall we be told, that if there is a man under heaven, whom the Gospel has not yet reached, it is but obedience to a last and solemn commandment, when the missionary travels even to the farthest verge of our horizon, that he may bear it to his door—and shall we be told of the thousands who are beside us, that, though their souls

are perishing for lack of knowledge, we might, without one care or one effort abandon them? Are we to give up as desperate, the Christian reformation of our land, when we read of those mighty achievements, and those heavenly outpourings, by which even the veriest wilds of heathenism have been fertilized—or, with such an instrument to work by as that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which in the hands of the Spirit of God hath wrought its miracles on the men of all ages, shall we forbear, as a hopeless enterprise, the evangelizing of our own homes, the eternal salvation of our own families? “Be of good cheer,” says the Spirit to the apostle, “I have much people” for thee in this city; and that, a city, too, the most profligate and abandoned that ever flourished on the face of our world. And still the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save. Neither is His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. It is open as ever to the cry of your intercessions—and on these we would devolve our cause. We entreat the fellowship of your prayers. We know that all human exertion, and eloquence, and wisdom, are vain without them—that lacking that influence which is gotten down by supplications from on high, sermons are but high-sounding cymbals, and churches but naked architecture—that mere pains are of no avail, and that it only lies within the compass of pains and of prayers to do anything.

And we, indeed, have great reason for encouragement, when we think of the subject of our message. When we are bidden in the text to preach, it is to preach the Gospel—it is to proclaim good news in the hearing of the people—it is to sound forth what surely must be felt welcome by many—it is to sound forth the glad tidings of great joy—it is to tell even the chief of sinners, that God is now willing to treat him as a sinner no longer; that He invites him to all the honours of righteousness; and that in virtue of a blood which cleanseth from all sin, and of an obedience to the rewards of which he is freely and fully invited, there is not a guilty creature in the world who may not draw nigh. Should he who preaches within these walls, turn out the faithful and the energetic expounder of this word of salvation—should the blessing of God be upon his ways, and that demonstration which cometh from on high, accompany his words—should he, filled with zeal in the high cause of your immortality, be instant among you in season, and out of season—and, devoted to the work of his sacred ministry, he make it his single aim to gather in a harvest of unperishable spirits, that by

him as an instrument of grace, have been rescued from hell, and raised to a blissful eternity—should this be indeed the high walk of his unremitting toil, and his unwearied perseverance—then, such is the power of the divine testimony, when urged out of the fulness of a believer's heart, and made to fall with the impression of his undoubted sincerity on those whom he addresses; that for ourselves we shall have no fear of a good and a glorious issue to this undertaking—and, therefore, as Paul often cast the success of his labours on the prayers of them for whom he laboured, would I again entreat that your supplications do ascend to the throne of grace for him who is to minister amongst you in word and in doctrine—that he may, indeed, be a pastor according to God's own heart, who shall feed a people here with knowledge and with spiritual understanding—that the travail of his soul may be blest to the conversion of many sons and daughters unto righteousness—that he may prove a comfort to all your hearts, and a great public benefit to all your families.

## DISCOURSE XIII.

## ON THE HONOUR DUE TO ALL MEN.

“Honour all men.—Honour the king.”—1 PETER ii. 17.

To honour all men is alike the lesson of Philosophy and Religion. He who studies Humanity, not according to its accidental distinctions in society, but in its great and general characteristics—he who looks to its moral nature as a piece of curious and interesting mechanism, all whose processes are as accurately exemplified in the mind of the poorest individual, as the laws or the constructions of anatomy are in his body—he whose office it is to contemplate the fabric of its principles and powers, and who can recognise even in humble life the goodliest specimens of both—with him the distinctions of rank are apt to be lost and forgotten, in the homage which he renders to man, simply as the possessor of a constitution that has so often exercised and regaled his faculties as an object of liberal curiosity. The homeliest peasant bears within the confines of his inner man, that very tablet on the lines and characters of which the highest philosopher may for years perhaps have been most intensely gazing. All the secrets of our wondrous economy are deposited there; and, in the heart even of the most unlettered man, the memory and the understanding and the imagination and the conscience and every other function and property of the yet inaccessible soul, are all in busy operation. To the owner of such an unexplored microcosm, we attach somewhat of the same reverence which we entertain for some profound and hidden mystery—and he who has laboured most anxiously to seize upon the mysteries of our nature, and therefore feels most profoundly how deep and how inscrutable they are, he perhaps is the most predisposed by his pursuits and his habits to “honour all men.”

Somewhat of the same sentiment is impressed upon us in the midst of a crowd—or as we pass along that street which is alive from morning to night with its endless flow of passengers. We

are aware of no contemplation that is more fitted to annihilate in one's own mind the importance of self; or rather to multiply this feeling, and make it be transferred by us to each individual of that restless and eager population by whom we are surrounded. To think of each having within the precincts of his own bosom a chamber of thoughts and purposes and fond imaginations as warm and teeming as our own, and of the busy history that is going on there; that every one of the immense multitude is the centre of his own distinct amphitheatre, which, however unknown to us, is the universe to him; that each meditative countenance of the vast and interminable number bespeaks a play of hopes and wishes and interests within, in every way as active, and felt to be of as great magnitude and urgency, as we experience in ourselves—further, to think that should my own heart cease its palpitations, and were the light of my own wakeful spirit to be extinguished for ever, that still there would be a world as full of life and intelligence as before; to think of myself as an unmissed or unnoticed thing among the myriads who are around me, or rather to think that with each of these myriads there are desires as vivid, and sensibilities as deep, and cares as engrossing, and social or family affections as tender, as those which I carry about with me in that little world to which no one eye hath access but the eye of my own consciousness—there is a humility that ought to be impressed by such a contemplation; or, if it do not utterly abase the reckoning that we have of ourselves, it ought at least to exalt our reckoning of all other men, and teach us to hold in honour those who, in the workings of the same nature, and fellowship of the very same interests, so thoroughly partake with us.

It is true, that, in what may be called the outward magnitude of these interests, there is a wide distance between a sovereign and his subject—between the cares of an empire, and the cares of a small household economy. That is, the empire, externally speaking, is greater than the household—while inwardly the cares, the cogitations, the sensibilities of the heart, whether oppressive or joyful, may be altogether the same. They be a different set of objects wherewith the monarch is conversant, and that keep in play the system of his thoughts and emotions, just as it is upon a different sort of food that his blood circulates or that his physical system is upholden. But as the peasant is like to him in respect of anatomy, so, with all the diversity of circumstances, he is substantially like to him, in the frame and

mechanism of his spirit. The outward causes by which each is excited are vastly different ; but the inward excitement of both is the same—and could we explore the little world that is in each of the two bosoms, we should recognise in each the same busy rotation of hopes and fears and wishes and anxieties. If it be indeed a just calculation that there is a superiority, a surpassing worth in the moral which far outweighs the material, then, let the cottage be as widely dissimilar from the palace as it may, there is a similarity between their inhabitants, not in that which is minute, but in that which is momentous—and our weightiest arguments for honouring the king bear with efficacy upon the lesson to honour all men.

And moreover, let us but rate the importance of one thinking and living spirit, when compared with all the mute and unconscious materialism which is in our universe. Without such a spirit, the whole of visible existence were but an idle waste—a nothingness—for what is beauty were there no eye to look upon it, and what is music were there no ear to listen, and what is matter in all its rich and wondrous varieties without a spectator mind to be regaled by the contemplation of them? One might conceive the very panorama that now surrounds us—the same earth and sea and skies that we now look upon—the same graces on the face of terrestrial nature, the same rolling wonders in the firmament—yet without one spark of thought or animation throughout the unpeopled amplitude. This in effect were nonentity. To put out all the consciousness that is in nature were tantamount to the annihilation of nature ; and the lighting up again of but one mind in the midst of this desolation, would of itself restore significancy to the scene, and be more than equivalent to the first creation of it. In other words, one living mind is of more worth than a dead universe—or there is that in every single peasant to which I owe sublimer homage than, if untenanted of mind, I should yield to all the wealth of this lower world, to all those worlds that roll in spaciousness and in splendour through the vastnesses of astronomy.

Our Saviour Himself hath instituted the comparison between a world and a soul—and whether both were alike perishable or alike enduring, His estimate of the soul's superiority would hold. He founds His computation on our brief tenure of all that is earthly, and on the magnitude of those abiding interests which wait the immortal spirit in other scenes of existence. All men are immortal. There is a grandeur of destination here that far outweighs all the



pride and pretension of this world's grandeur. Those lordly honours which some men fetch from the antiquity of their race are but poor indeed, when compared with that more signal honour which all men have in the eternity of their duration. In respect of immortality, the great and the small ones of the earth stand on an equal eminence—and in respect of the death which comes before it, both have to sink to the same humiliating level. The prince shares with the peasant in the horror and loathsomeness of death—the peasant shares with the prince in the high distinction of immortality. It is because, in the poorest man's bosom, there resides an undying principle—it is because of that endless futurity which is before him, and in the progress of which all the splendours and obscurations of our present state will be speedily forgotten—it is because, though of yesterday, the bliss and the brightness of coming centuries may be upon his path; and, whatever the complexion of his future history shall be, yet the sublime character of eternity shall rest upon it—it is because of these that humanity, however it be clothed and conditioned in this evanescent world, should be the object of an awful reverence; and if, by reason of those perishable glories which sit on a monarch's brow for but one generation, it be imperative to honour the king—then, by reason of those glories which the meanest may attain to, and which are to last for ever, it is still more imperative to honour all men.

It is in virtue of the natural equality between man and man, of the like noble prospects and the like high capacities among all the members of the species—that we have never hesitated on the question of popular or plebeian education; and when it is asked, how far should the illumination of the lower orders in society be permitted to go?—we do not scruple to reply, that it should be to the very uttermost of what their taste and their time and their convenience will permit. There have been a dread and a jealousy upon this topic wherewith we cannot at all sympathize—somewhat of the same alarm for the progress of scholarship among the working-classes, that is felt for the progress of sedition—just as if the admission of light amongst them were to throw the whole mass into a state of busy and mischievous fermentation—and some great coming disorder were surely to result from the growing intelligence of those who form the vast majority of our commonwealth. And, in addition to what injury it is apprehended the social edifice at large might sustain from the elevation of the popular mind, it is further

thought that individually it is fraught with uttermost discomfort to the people themselves; that it will induce a restlessness, a discontent, a wayward ambition, wholly unsuited to their taste as labourers; that henceforward they will spurn at the ignoble drudgeries of their lot; and that the fruit of making them scholars will be wholly to unhinge and unsettle them as workmen. And when once this impatience becomes general, a certain fierce and feverish aspiring, it is feared, will run throughout that class in society who even now by the superiority of their muscular force are enough formidable—and of whom the terror is, that when once a mental force is superadded to the muscular, they will overleap all the barriers of public safety, and be the fell instruments of a wild and wasteful anarchy over the face of the land.

This is not altogether the place for exposing what we deem to be the utter groundlessness of such imaginations; and therefore, without touching at all on the political apprehension lest education should lodge a power that is dangerous in the hands of the labouring-classes—we shall just say of the personal, or of that which relates to the habits and character of the individual labourer, that we believe it to be scarcely ever if at any time realized. We positively find them to be among the best symptoms of a trusty and well-conditioned mechanic, if, upon entering his house, we find the humble library upon his shelves—or if in taking account of his hours, we find the time which many give to evening dissipation given by him to the attendance or the preparations of a mechanic school. There is no such discrepancy between the powers and the principles of our complex nature, no such awkward sorting or balancing of parts in the human constitution, as that there must be a stifling of some in order to make room for the right and prosperous operation of the others—as, for example, that all liberal curiosity, all appetite for the informations of science should be kept in check, lest industry be relaxed, or the cares of a family-provision be altogether forgotten. The ingredients of our compound being are really in far better adjustment than that all should be so very apt to go into disorder, upon any one of them being fostered into activity by the excitement of its own peculiar gratification—and it will be found that a taste for literature, and patient assiduity in labour, and a reflective prudence in every matter of family economics, and a habit of sound and good workmanship on the one hand, with a well-exercised intellect even in the subjects of general specula-

tion upon the other—that all these may be at work, and in fullest harmony together with one and the same individual. Instead of spoiling him as an artizan, they would only transform him into an artizan of a higher caste; and as there is a general movement all over the land for a higher education to our people, let us do nothing to curb the energies of their aspiring intellect, but rather rejoice in the bright anticipation that must at length be realized, of a well-taught and a highly lettered peasantry. On a progress like this we would lay no limitation. Let it go freely and indefinitely onwards—nor be afraid, as many are, lest there should be too much of schooling or even too much of science for the common people. That were a noble achievement in political economy, did it point out the way by which, through better wages and less work, the children of handicraft and of hard labour might be somewhat lightened of their toils. And that were a still nobler achievement in philanthropy, could their then wider and more frequent intervals of repose be reclaimed from loose and loathsome dissipation—could even an infant but growing taste for philosophy be made to supplant all the coarser depravities of human vice—and they, admitted to more of companionship than they now have with men of a higher walk in society, give frequent demonstration, that, even amid the drudgery of their humble condition, there was among them much of the unquenched fire of genius, and a still vigorous play of those perceptions and those powers by which our common nature is ennobled.

Having said thus much for that education which gives the knowledge of science to the common people—we feel ourselves placed on still higher vantage ground, when we plead for that education to them which gives the knowledge of religion. If we hold the one to be desirable, we hold the other to be indispensable. In our estimation there is a certain narrowness of soul among those who are jealous even of their most daring ascents into the region of a higher scholarship; but to lay an interdict upon all scholarship, is in truth nothing better than the midnight darkness of Popery. And yet, in certain quarters of our land, there still lurks, in deep and settled inveteracy, that intolerance which would withhold the very alphabet from our population; and though in one respect it is the key to the revealed mysteries of heaven, the instrument for unlocking that gospel which was designed so specially for the ignorant and the poor; yet still there be some who, aloft from all sympathy with

the lower orders, can admit of no higher demand for them than the mere wants of their animal existence. The eternity of the poor does not enter into their care or computation at all. They are viewed in scarcely any other light than as the instruments of labour, as so many pieces of living mechanism that have their useful application along with those other springs and principles of action which keep the busy apparatus of our great manufactories in play; their limbs as the levers of a certain kind of machinery, and the spirit that is within them but as that moving force by which the human enginery is set agoing. The immortality of this spirit is as little regarded, as if it were indeed but a vapour that passeth away. It is valued only because of the materialism which it animates, or of the motion which by means of a curious and complicated framework, it can impress on any tangible thing that is transformed thereby into some article of merchandise. It is thus that humanity is apt to be addressed or treated with, singly for the physical strength which it might be made to yield in the service of busy artizanship; and, without one ungenerous reflection on the great capitalists of our land, it is thus that, sometimes at least, there is a certain grossness of mercantile spirit, in virtue of which, our nature, in despite of all its noble capacities, and the exceeding grandeur of its ultimate destination, is very apt to be grossly brutalized.

It is therefore the more refreshing, when, in some densely peopled territory that is all in a fervour with the smoke and the din and the unremitting turmoil of its many fabrications, there is seen an interest to arise in the religion of the assembled host, and on the side of their immortal well-being—when, for so wide and plenteous a harvest, there at length appears a band of resolute and devoted labourers—when, in the midst of a field so rich in the materials for a great spiritual manufacture that has its gains and its proceeds in eternity, men are to be found of compass enough and Christianity enough for this highest enterprise of charity—when a company is formed with a design and on a speculation so magnificent, as far to surpass the sublimest adventures of commerce; and, instead of that transformation on the rude produce of our country, which is effected by the labour of human hands, it is proposed to go forth on the people of the country as the subjects of a nobler transformation; and to impress upon human souls, now in the darkness and earthliness of nature, a glory that is imperishable.

It is a reproach to the spirit of merchandise—when in its ex-

clusive demand for the physical strength and service of human beings, it gives but little regard to their eternity—yet among the sons of merchandise, we do meet with many of those zealous and enlightened philanthropists, who, by their efforts in the cause both of common and of Christian scholarship, have done much to redeem the imputation. There is indeed the grossest injustice in every imputation that leads to the fastening of an odium or an obloquy, upon a whole order—and we might here take the opportunity of saying in reference to another order, and when we hear so much of an alleged conspiracy on the part of monarchs against the illumination of our species, it is far indeed from holding universally. There is a growing liberality upon the subject among all the classes of society—and as surely as workmasters are now learning that education furnishes them with their best and most valuable servants—so surely will Kings also learn, that the firmest basis upon which their authority can be upholden, is a virtuous and a well-schooled peasantry.

The ancient prejudice upon this question is now on all hands rapidly subsiding. The cause of popular ignorance is no longer incorporated, as it wont to be, with the cause of loyalty and established order. Even they who sit in the highest places, and were at all times the most sensitively fearful of any new element, that, when brought into play, might derange and unsettle the existing framework of society—even they can now look without alarm on that heaving of the popular mind towards a higher scholarship, which now is fermenting and spreading over the whole face of the British commonwealth. We are aware of nothing more truly important to the cause of education, than some recent practical testimonies of our landed aristocracy to the worth of Scotland's parochial teachers, and their offer of a helping hand to secure and to speed the ascent of our common people, though already perhaps the most lettered in Europe or in the world, even above the level of their present acquirements. There could not more authentic demonstration have been given, and from a quarter more thoroughly unsuspecting, to the safety of a learning for the vulgar—and there is nought more delightful than thus to behold the upper classes of society giving welcome and encouragement to the lower for a nearer assimilation with themselves in that knowledge which is more honourable than wealth, in those mental accomplishments which shed its truest grace and dignity upon our nature.

There are two opposite directions in which we have to witness what may be called an ultra or extreme politics. One of those extremes is now getting fast obsolete at least in Scotland—for in our sister country there is still an inveteracy about it, which may not give way for perhaps one or two generations. To picture it forth most effectually, we might seize in imagination upon some one individual by whom it is realized—who, frank and generous and kind-hearted in all the relations of private society, yet on every question of public or parliamentary warfare shows all the fiercest antipathies of high and antiquated cavaliership—who, merciful and munificent in all his dealings with his own people, yet eyes a boding mischief in every new and advancing movement by the people of the land—who deems it perhaps one of the glories of Old England to have a jovial and well-fed peasantry, yet would feel the education of them to be a raising of them out of their places, and so a disturbance on the sober and settled orthodoxy of other days—who fears a lurking sectarianism in this active and widely-diffused scholarship—that might afterwards break forth into outrage on England's venerated throne, and her noble hierarchy; and therefore would vastly rather than this age of philanthropic restlessness, have the age brought back again, when pastime and holiday and withal a veneration for Church had full ascendant over the hearts and habits of a then unlettered population. Still in many of England's princely halls, in many a baronial residence, there exists a feeling that her golden time has passed away—and that this new device of a popular education is among the deadliest of the destroyers. High in loyalty, and devoted by all the influences of sentiment and ancestry and sworn partisanship to the prerogatives of monarchy; they honour the king—but, overlooking the intellect and the capacity and the immortal nature that reside even in the meanest of his subjects, and so regardless as they are of the still higher prerogatives of mind; they do not and they know not how to honour all men.

But in counterpart to this, there is another extreme that to our taste is greatly more offensive than the former—when the cause of education is vilified by mixing up with it in the meantime that accursed thing which education at length will utterly exterminate—when a mechanic school is made the vehicle of an outrageous disaffection to all authority, and a mechanic publication breathes the fierceness of radicalism throughout all its

pages—when one cannot in any way devise either for the religion or the science of our lower orders, but this unclean spirit must insinuate and turn it all to loathsomeness; and every honest effort to obtain a more enlightened peasantry is either paralysed or poisoned, by the obtruded alliance of men, who bear no other regard to the people than as the instruments of some great public or political overthrow. Still it vouches nobly for the good of a people's scholarship, that this abuse is chiefly exemplified in that land where they are just emerging from ignorance, and that in our own more lettered country it is comparatively unknown—that it is there and not here where this cause has been seized upon by demagogues, who, while they would flatter the multitude into the belief that they honour all men, give full manifestation by all their writings and their ways that they do not honour the king.

It is in such conflicts of human passion and human party, that Christianity comes forth in the meekness of wisdom, and points out to us the more excellent way. It unites loyalty to the King with love, nay reverence, for the very humblest of his subject population—and can both do homage to the dignity of office that sits upon the one, and to those exalted capacities both of worth and of intellect which lie in wide and wealthy diffusion through the other. There is nought of the pusillanimous in its devotion to the Crown, and nought of the factious and the turbulent in the descents which it makes among the common people. We have felt that glow which the presence of a monarch can awaken, when, instead of the crouching servility of bondsmen, we are conscious of nothing but the generous and high-minded enthusiasm of gallant chivalry. And equal to this is the pure and philanthropic triumph which the spectacle of a beggar's school is fitted to awaken, when instead of a fiery sedition lighted up in the heart and rankling its mischievous fermentations there, the mind indulges in the soothing perspective of that brighter day, when the whole community of our empire shall be moulded into a harmonious and well-ordered family. To call forth the energies of the popular mind by the power of a high education being made to bear upon it, will most surely add to the stability of the throne, while it must serve to lift and to embellish the whole platform of society. It will speed the progress of the species, but not along a track of revolutionary violence. The moral perfectibility of the infidel

may call for the demolition both of altars and of thrones—but the operations of the Christian philanthropist leave the fabric of our civil polity untouched; and, in that Millennium after which he aspires, he sees Kings to be the nursing-fathers and Queens the nursing-mothers of our Zion. He has no fellowship either with those who would revile the monarch, or who would refuse to enlighten the people—and, though fired with the hopes of some great and coming enlargement, he finds them on the prophecies of a book, whose precepts within the utterance of one breath and placed together in the same text, are to honour the King and to honour all men.



## DISCOURSE XIV.

## ON THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF FIDELITY.

“ Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”—TITUS ii. 10.

It is the duty of the Christian minister to bring forward not one part of the divine will, but all the parts of it—and whatever he sees urged and insisted upon in the Bible, he lies under the solemn obligation of urging and insisting upon it also. Now it is remarkable, that, when urging some of the commandments, he is looked upon as more religiously employed than when urging some other of the commandments. There are certain subjects which do not carry to the eye of many, the same aspect of godliness with others. A sermon on sabbath-breaking, for example, would be regarded as a more characteristic exercise, and as more allied with the solemn and appropriate functions of the pulpit, than a sermon upon theft; and, generally speaking, while the duties of the first table are listened to by the more serious professors of Christianity with a pious and respectful feeling of their high importance—it may be observed that the duties of the second table, when urged in all their minuteness, and brought forward in all their varieties, and illustrated by references to the homely and familiar experience of human life, are looked upon as having a certain degree of earthliness about them—to be as much inferior in point of religiousness to the duties of the first table, as the employments of a common week-day are inferior to the employments of the sabbath—in a word, while the one bears to many the aspect of sacredness, the other bears the aspect of secularity—and when a minister gives his strength and his earnestness for a whole sermon to the latter, there is a feeling among his hearers that he has descended from that high ground on which a godly or an orthodox minister loves to expatiate.

We forbear at present to enter into the explanation of this very notable peculiarity, though it does admit, we think, of a

most interesting explanation. The thing complained of, forms a serious obstacle in the way of our attempts to enforce the whole will of God, and to explain the whole of His counsel. If there be any part of that will of which the exposition is resisted as a very odd and uncommon and perhaps ridiculous subject from the pulpit, how shall we be able to command a reverential hearing for it? In what way shall we establish the authority of God over all the concerns of a man's history? Should not the solemnity of religious obligation be made to overspread the whole field and compass of human affairs?—and if it be not so, is not this deposing God from the supremacy which belongs to Him? Is it not just saying that there are places and occasions in which we will not have Him to reign over us? Is it not disowning His right of having all things done to His glory? And those hearers who love to be told of what they owe to God on the sabbath and in the holy days of sacrament and prayer—but who love not to be told of what they owe Him in their shops and in their market-places and in their every-day employments—they are just narrowing the limits of His jurisdiction, and with all their seeming reverence for godliness as the only high and appropriate theme for the pulpit, they are, in fact, wresting from God His sovereignty over the great bulk of human existence. With the quit-rent of a few occasional acknowledgments, they are for securing the mighty remainder of time to themselves, and are for putting off with fragments that Being who demands of all His creatures the homage of an entire service—the incense of a perpetual offering.

We should like all hearers to feel the religiousness of that topic which this text leads us to insist upon. We should like them to annex as serious a feeling of solemnity and obligation to the eighth of God's commandments, as to the fourth of His commandments. Both were announced in thunder from Mount Sinai. Both were heard to issue in the same voice of authority from the throne of the Lawgiver. The violations of both are written in the book of God's remembrance; and they are ranked among the bad deeds done in the body, which will bring down from the judgment-seat the same awful doom upon the children of iniquity. The place which the commandment possesses in the decalogue is surely of no great consequence in the matter. Enough that it be a commandment. Enough for one and for all of us that thus saith the Lord. He orders one thing, and He orders another. If the one thing must be observed with

reverence, because He orders it—there is precisely the same reason for the other thing being also observed with reverence. And if “Sanctify the Sabbath-day and keep it holy” be a godly and religious subject, then do we contend that “Thou shalt not steal” is a godly and a religious subject also.

In this case the minister has no choice. If the consciences of any of his hearers are blind upon this subject, this is the very reason why he should labour to open and to enlighten them. He stands charged with the office of expounding and urging and solemnly insisting upon all the requisitions of the Bible. If he do not warn the sinner from his way, the sinner will die in his iniquity, but his blood will be required of him. This is perfectly decisive as to his conduct. It is with him a matter of self-interest, as well as of duty, to warn his hearers against all sin—and, knowing as he does that there is an awful day of reckoning before them, that he must appear in the midst of them at the bar of God, that he will be called upon to give an account of them and be examined upon this, whether he has watched over the souls of his people, and faithfully attempted to guard them against all error, and to warn them against all unrighteousness—wo be to him if he is deterred by any senseless or ignorant levity whatever, from coming forward with a faithful and a firm exposition of the truth, or from sounding in their ears this awful testimony of God’s abhorrence of the sin of stealing, that thieves shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

In the further prosecution of this discourse, we shall first endeavour to explain what the precise sin is which the text warns us against. We shall secondly insist on its exceeding sinfulness, in spite of all the pleas which are offered to palliate or to excuse it. And thirdly, we shall press the duty which is opposed to the sin of the text, that is, good fidelity, by the motive which the text itself insists upon, that we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

The sin of the text receives a particular name, and it must therefore receive a particular explanation. It is not called stealing, though it be certainly a species of it. Stealing is neither more nor less than taking to one’s-self what belongs to another, and what he does not give. We should apply this term to the act of a man who entered into another house than that in which he tarried, and bore away of the movables he found in it—or to the act of a man who came to another farm than that on which he laboured, and carried off such produce as he could lift

away with him—or to the act of a man who made out his access into a shop or a workhouse belonging to another master, and abstracted such money or such goods as he could lay his hand upon. These are so many acts of theft—and to give a clear idea of what that is which turns an act of theft into an act of purloining, we have only to conceive, that, instead of another entering the house, a servant within it were to help himself to such things as he had access to, without any understood allowance from the master or the mistress who employed him—or that, instead of another coming to a farm, a labourer belonging to it were to make a daily and a weekly habit of secreting a part of its produce, for the purpose of feeding his own little stock, or helping out the maintenance of his young family—or that, instead of another finding his way into your shop or your workhouse, the man you employed to keep the one or to work in the other, were to pocket for his own use what he thinks he might bear away without too great a hazard of detection. All these are so many undoubted examples of theft—but such a theft as would more readily be characterized by the term “purloining.” To steal is to take that which is not our own. To purloin is to take that which is not ours also; but then the thing so taken must be that which we have in trust, or that to which our situation as an agent or a servant or an overseer gives us free and frequent access. When purloining is done upon a large scale, it sometimes changes its name, though not its nature. It is then called an embezzlement. To embezzle is quite equivalent to purloin in the nature of the act, though greater in the extent of it. Thus we have heard of the embezzlement of public stores, of the embezzlement of the royal treasury. It is an act of theft performed by a confidential agent of the crown—and we have succeeded in the object of all these explanations, if we have led our hearers to perceive the reason why Paul addresses the advice of the text to people in a particular situation. They are in the situation of servants—and, taking in the 9th verse, the whole advice runs thus, “Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

We now proceed in the second place to insist on the exceeding sinfulness of this sin, in spite of all the pleas which are offered to palliate or to excuse it.

The first palliation is a kind of tacit one, by which the understanding is imposed upon, and the conscience quieted, merely through the change of name which this crime has undergone. Because it is not commonly called stealing, it is not conceived to have the disgrace or the odiousness of stealing. There is a wonderful power of imposition in words; and how many a purloiner may quiet all that is troublesome within him by the reflection that what he does is not stealing; it is only taking. Thus may he try to escape the imputation of stealing, by merely giving a different name to his iniquity—but, if the thing thus taken be not his to take, it is to all intents and purposes, stealing—he merits the full disgrace of being called a thief; and, what is still more awful than all the disgrace with which this world can cover him, he is guilty of a sin which, if persisted in, will most infallibly exclude him from the inheritance of the kingdom of God. To undeceive him, he should be made distinctly to know that there is no difference whatever in the sins; that an angry and offended God looks with equal displeasure upon both, and will assign to each the same awful punishment in the great day of reckoning. This low work of purloining is just stealing under another name. It is taking what belongs to another, and what that other has not given. Every understanding will acknowledge, that, however it may be glossed over by another and a milder designation, it is an act of theft; and what every understanding will acknowledge, we want every conscience to feel. But we go further. We take up a principle contained in our Shorter Catechism, where it is said, in answer to the question, “Are all sins equally heinous in the sight of God?” That “some sins, by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.” Now purloining contains in it an aggravation which does not belong to a bare and simple example of stealing. The stranger who does not know me, and whom I never trusted, may come to my premises and steal of my property. But the servant who purloins does know me, lives under my roof, is maintained by my wages, and, above all, has had a confidence placed in him which he has chosen to abuse and to violate. I left a door open, or I made over a charge, or I invested him with a particular commission, and why? because I had faith in his integrity and discretion. The stranger thief is guilty of one vice—an act of dishonesty. The household thief is dishonest too; but he is more than this. He has betrayed the trust I put in him. He has repaid my good opinion of

him by an act of ingratitude and an act of unfaithfulness. I was led away by his fair appearances; and he has turned out a hypocrite. He has added, to the guilt of stealing, the guilt of cunning and falsehood and habitual concealment. These are aggravations which make the purloining of the servant far more provoking to him who suffers by it, than the depredations of the nightly vagabond. But they are not only more provoking to man—they are more provoking to a just and a holy God. The aggravations which we have just now spoken of will tell on the awful sentence of the great day. The discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart sees and judges of every one of them; and when the time cometh that the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open, the low pilferments of the farm, of the family, and of the workshop, will appear to the shame and condemnation of the guilty.

But there is another plea on which the purloiner tries to find for himself something like an acquittal from the shame and the remorse of his secret iniquities. However great at the end of months or of years his depredations may be in the amount, yet, to escape detection, he is forced to make them small in the detail. The distinct and single theft of every one day is but a petty affair—and his conscience easily falls into the snare, that, as what he does take at any one time is so very little, it is not worth the thinking of. But what right has he, we would ask, to make any addition to the eighth commandment? God says, "Thou shalt not steal," and then He brings the commandment to a close. He does not say, Thou shalt not steal much, leaving us at freedom to steal a little, and to judge how little we may steal with innocence and safety. He says, Thou shalt not steal, and then He leaves off. If we steal the value of a farthing, it is a stolen farthing. It is evidence enough to convict of a breach of the eighth commandment, by which we are enjoined not to steal at all. Little as we may think of it, it is enough to convict us of disobedience to the entire and absolute commandment of God—and it will turn out the accursed thing, which, if not repented of and not turned from, will be the death and the condemnation of our souls. He that is unjust in the least, says our Saviour, is unjust also in much. It may be so little as to be the very least—but if stolen, it is an act of injustice—and He who knew what was in man says, that he who can do the very least act of injustice can do a great one. O how many go to hell with what they account small sins. Small sin! is sin a small matter?

If we have stolen to the value of a single grain, we have broken the law of God; and do we call that an affair of small consequence? The moment we stretch forth our hand to what is another's, be it ever so little, we have broken the line which lies betwixt duty and rebellion. We have got over the wall which separates lawful from forbidden ground, and however little way we have got on the forbidden ground, still we are on it; and, if apprehended there and brought to the bar of judgment, we shall be treated as criminals. Go not, ye purloiners and household thieves, to delude your consciences any more upon this subject. Go not to make any distinction which the law of God does not make. Think not that you will escape condemnation; because the thing stolen is so very little. Think not that this plea will serve you with God, whose law must be fulfilled to the very last jot and tittle of it—and we tell you that if you ever pray and lift up your hands unto God—then though you have stolen only to the amount of a morsel or a fragment which does not belong to you, God will look upon your hands and see them to be unclean. The defilement of the thing stolen sticks to them; and He beholding it will turn in indignation from your prayers and your offering.

The next plea we propose to your attention is, that the master out of whose stock we have purloined is rich—he will not miss it, and it can do him no harm; still making additions of their own, you observe, to the law of God; still doing as the Pharisees did before them—making the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions, and teaching for doctrines the commandments and inventions of men. God says, Thou shalt not steal. He does not say, Thou shalt not steel from the poor, leaving us at liberty to steal from the rich whenever we have opportunity. The distinction betwixt rich and poor in this matter is a distinction of their own. By making this plea they not only disobey God, but they insult Him by offering to mend His law, and bringing forward what they think a better one of their own. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of God shall not pass away. And that word is—Let him that stole steal no more. There is no allusion to rich or poor in this injunction. Nay, in the text it is stealing from the rich that is expressly forbidden. The poor, generally speaking, are the servants; and the rich, generally speaking, are the masters—and servants are ordered not to purloin from their masters, but to show all good fidelity. No, there is nothing for it, but an entire separation

from this unclean and accursed practice. It is an express violation of God's law, and admits of no plea, no palliation. It is a dangerous experiment to trifle with sin, and to venture upon what we are pleased to think the lesser shades and degrees of it. The moment that sin is committed, even in the very least degrees of it, the fence which separates obedience from rebellion is broken down. After we have got over that fence, there is no saying how far we may go. After a garden wall is once leaped, it is not doing much more to enter its most precious depositories, and spoil it of its fairest and richest productions. And here we may repeat, by the way, that the first sin ever committed by man forms a striking refutation of the two pleas which we are now attempting to expose. The thing stolen was a fruit. The master he stole it from was the Lord of heaven and of earth—to whom belongs the cattle on a thousand hills, and who sits surrounded with the wealth of innumerable worlds. What becomes of the smallness of the sin now? It was just this sin which banished Adam from paradise, which broke up the communion between earth and heaven—which entailed ruin on a whole species of moral and intelligent creatures. The infidel laughs at the story, and with all the parade of an enlightened wisdom he counts it ridiculous—he thinks how paltry the offence—and how big the mischief and the ruin which are stated to have sprung from it. But he only betrays the grossness of a mind which cannot rise above the estimates and the calculations of an ordinary man—which looks no further than to the visible performance, and is blind to the only principle which gives to the performance its moral character. It is not in the magnitude of the thing done, that the chief magnitude of the offence lies. It is the state of mind implied by the doing of it. Had Adam rooted out every tree of paradise and dismantled the garden of all its beauties, we might have thought that his offence lay in the material extent of the injury that was done by him. But Adam did no more than steal a forbidden fruit; and, for any evil performed by his hand, Eden might have remained in all its bloom and in all its loveliness. But in proportion as the material hurt was small, is the grandeur and the entireness of the moral lesson conveyed by it. It leads our single eye to the foulness of that turpitude which lies in disobedience to God. The thing done was small in itself; but it carried rebellion in its principle. Thus saith the Lord, was the sanction which lay upon it—and that sanction was trampled upon. When God said,



Let there be light, and there was light—we look upon this as a sublime and wonderful evidence of His power. When God said, In the day he eateth he shall die, and he did eat, and from that moment a cloud of malignant darkness gathered upon the head of the offender, and hangs to this hour over his distant posterity—we look upon this as an evidence no less sublime of His truth and of His righteousness. The simplicity of the visible act enables us to see the spiritual character of this great transaction in all its majesty—nor can the senseless levities we have heard on the subject of Adam's fall, keep us from viewing it as one in dignity with the other events of that wonderful period, when the Almighty had spread a new creation around him, and displayed the attributes of His high and unchangeable nature among the beings whom He had formed.

Take this lesson to yourselves, ye purloiners, who are going on deceiving your consciences, and heaping ruin and condemnation upon your deluded souls. You think the thing purloined is so very small, and the master you stole it from is so very rich. But what right have you to set your thinkings and your excusings against the awful authority of "Thus saith the Lord"? It is no matter how small the theft. It is no matter how rich the man who suffers by it. God's authority is trampled upon by the act. His holy Bible is despised. His judgment is bid defiance to—and the saying of the apostle Paul is as much slighted and undervalued as if no apostle had ever said it, that "thieves shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Oh! if any of you have been hitherto deceived upon this subject, suffer now the word of exhortation. Go not to trifle any longer with the precious interest of your souls. Resist not what we say, because it touches painfully upon your practices or your consciences. We mean no offence. We want to stir up no anger among you. We bring forward no railing accusation. It is the general and unceasing importance of the subject which has led us to fix upon it; for we give you our solemn assurance, that we know of no act of purloining committed by any one of you—nor do we have in our eye a single guilty individual. For anything we know, there is not one of you who is not nobly superior to the slightest taint and degree of this iniquity—and, in this case, the sole use of this sermon may be that you shall be kept clean through the word now spoken to you. But lest there should be a purloiner in this congregation, we think it our high and awfully incumbent duty to stretch forth our hand that we may arrest and reclaim

him from that road of perdition on which he is hastening—and surely you will grant us your indulgence, when we say that in doing what we have done, we have only lifted our testimony against what we honestly believe would land him in everlasting burnings if it be persisted in.

But let us now endeavour, in the third place, to press the duty which is opposed to the sin of the text, that is, good fidelity—by the motive which the text itself insists upon, that you may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Let us observe, however, that the servants whom Titus was to exhort were among the people of his own congregation. They formed a Christian community; and, whatever kind of people this designation may be applied to now-a-days, it was applied in those days to men who, in embracing the profession of the faith, formally renounced the errors or the idolatries of their former years—to men who, in making this profession, must generally speaking have been moved to it by a real belief in the great and prominent truths of that new religion which was proposed to them: Or, in other words, the exhortation of the text is recommended by Paul to be addressed to men who not only embraced the profession of the faith, but had embraced the faith—to men who felt the influence of the great doctrines of Christianity—to men who had God revealed to them in their Saviour, and knew of the grace of God that bringeth salvation, and were under that process of teaching which the grace of God is employed in carrying on, and the object of which is that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world. We know well the use that has been made of these considerations. Bring, it is said, these dissuasives against their evil practices to bear upon Christian servants. Exhort those who are already in the faith; and, as to those who are not in the faith, including for anything we know the great mass of servants who are now before us, suspend all our attacks upon their sins till we have brought them to the Saviour—furnish them with a Christian motive before we press them to a Christian reformation—make them the subjects of grace, by giving them that faith which has the promise of the Spirit, ere we attempt that teaching which can only be done effectually by the grace that bringeth salvation. Now it is all very true that no obedience is pure in its principle but that to which we are constrained by the love of God reconciled to us in Christ Jesus—no obedience is successful in its accomplishment but

that which is wrought through the strength of Him who confers power to become the children of God only on those who believe—no obedience is acceptable to the Father but such as is offered up in the name of the Son. All this is most true—and it must be our incessant object to grow in such obedience, by growing in the only principle which can actuate and uphold it. But recollect that there are expedients set agoing by the wisdom of God for bringing men to Christ—and there are considerations addressed to sinners for the purpose of convincing them of danger, and forcing them to flee for refuge unto Christ—and there are certain performances which, in the very act of coming unto Christ, they are called upon to do—and therefore it is, that, though at this moment you may be out of Christ and away from Him, we count it a seasonable topic for each and all of you, when we tell you of the exceeding sinfulness of every one sin with which you are chargeable. It is right that every kind of unrighteousness should be made manifest to your consciences—for the wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness. It is right that every purloiner should be made to know what thousands and thousands more of purloiners are not aware of, that the heavy judgment of God lies upon them for that offence which they are apt to look on as so light and so common and so natural and so excusable. It is right they should be made to understand how great the danger is, and what the place of security to flee to—and surely the more they are burdened with a sense of the wrath of God, the more will they feel the weight and importance of the saying, that unless they believe in Christ this wrath abideth on them. And surely if Christ said, at the very outset, Repent and believe the gospel—if He said, He that followeth after me must forsake all—if the grace of God, at the first moment of its appearance, taught men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts—we are not out of place when we tell the most ignorant and graceless purloiner among you, to turn him to Christ, that he may obtain the forgiveness of all his misdoings; and when we tell him within the compass of the same breathing to turn him from his iniquities—that the man who keeps by his sins is in fact keeping away from the Saviour—that he is loving darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil—that he is not coming to the Saviour, for he is not doing what all who come must and will do—he is not stirring himself up in the business of forsaking all. The evil and inveterate habits of an unfaithful servant he will not forsake. He clings to them as

so many idols that he cannot bring himself to part with. Christ, who claims the authority of His alone Master, does not prevail upon him to give up the service of those sins which lord it over him. And it is therefore that he should know, how every day that he persists in this forbidden practice, he is treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and putting the grace of an offered salvation and the voice of a beseeching God away from him.

Let us therefore urge it most earnestly upon you that you consider your doings. Christ is willing to receive you; and if you are willing to come to Him, to you belongs the whole extent of His purchased salvation. But you are not willing to come to Him, if you are more willing to retain your iniquities; and in these iniquities you will die. Sell your goods to feed the poor, says our Saviour to the young man in the Gospel, and then come and follow me; but he would not come to Him upon these terms, and his devotedness to his wealth was the bar that stood in his way to the kingdom of God. In like manner we call upon you purloiners to cleanse your hands and come to the Saviour. If you will not come upon these terms, the rich man had his bar in the way of salvation, and you have yours. He would not give up his property, and you will not give up the produce of your petty pilferments. You are not willing to come to Christ that you may have life—for, sweet as is the life which is at His giving, it is not so sweet to your taste, as is the sweetness of those stolen waters which have hitherto been your secret and your habitual enjoyment. Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, and he is therefore called the profane Esau. How much more profane are you, who are putting the offer of a birthright in heaven away from you—and for what?—for the crumbs and fragments of your paltry depredations. From this moment we charge you to touch them no more. Bid your hand cease from its pilferments; and compel it to your bidding. If what we have said tell upon your conscience, this very night will it tell upon your conduct. To-morrow comes, and it will find you a reforming man—earnest how to find your salvation, and busy to frame your doings that you may turn unto the Lord. You will get up from the bed of reflection, with the purpose of keeping yourself clear and aloof from your wonted dishonesties; and with a prayer that you may be strengthened in the execution of this purpose. Till we see something of this kind, we see no evidence of your yet having taken a single step to the Saviour. Keep by the pilferings against which we

have been charging you ; and you are not so much as moving towards Christ, nor will you ever reach Him. Cease then from them at this moment—do this in the very act of going to the Saviour and seeking after Him ; and who knows but this first and foremost of your visible reformations, humble as it is when compared with the accomplishments of him who stands perfect and complete in the whole will of God, who knows but it may betoken the commencement of a good work in your soul?—that awakening of the sinner's eye on which Christ has promised that He shall give light—the outset of that path which conducts from one degree of grace unto another, till you reach the stature of the full-grown Christian—an earlier stage of the journey which conducts him who cometh unto Christ to all His promised manifestations, that, made to shine upon your head, will make you rejoice more and more in the perfections of His righteousness, in the fulness of His grace and the freeness of His kind invitations, in the sureness of those never-failing supplies out of which you are strengthened with all might in the inner man, and enabled to do all things through the Spirit which is given unto you.

We now proceed to the motive which Paul urged upon the servants he was addressing—that they might adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. We think that two very distinct, and at the same time very affecting and important lessons, may be drawn from this single clause of the verse now before us. The first is, that a man's Christianity might be made to show itself throughout the whole business of his vocation, whatever it may be—that it may be made to give a pervading expression to his whole history—that it might accompany and be at work with him throughout every doing and every exercise he can put his hand to—that, in a word, the influence of its spirit is a perennial influence, ever present in the heart, and ever sending forth a powerful and a perpetual control over the conduct. It is not merely in one thing, or in another thing, that the doctrine of Christ is capable of being adorned. It admits of being adorned in all things. Doctrine sometimes signifies the thing taught ; and it sometimes signifies the process of teaching. We understand it more in the latter sense on the present occasion. Show how excellent, and how purifying, and how universal, in point of salutary influence, this teaching is. Show how completely it goes over the whole round of human performances. Show with what a comprehensive eye it surveys the map of human life, and stamps its own colour and gives its

own outline to its most remote and subordinate provinces. Let the world see, that wherever a man of Christian doctrine is present, and whatever the employment be that he is engaged with, there at all times goes along with him a living exhibition of the power and the efficacy of Christian doctrine; that he represents by every one action the character of the gospel which he professes; that the stamp of its morality may be recognised on his every distinct and separate performance; and that others may say of each and of all his doings, that this is done in the style and manner of a Christian.

When a man becomes Christian, what, we would ask, is the most visible expression of the change which has taken effect upon him? We are not speaking of the change in its essential character, which is neither more nor less than a thorough and aspiring devotedness to the will of that God whom he now sees by the eye of faith to be reconciled to him, through the blood of an everlasting covenant. The question we are putting relates to the seen effect of this principle upon the man's outward habits and performances; and we ask, which is the most notable and conspicuous effect, and such as will most readily arrest the eye and the observation of acquaintances? We know well what the general impression of the world is upon this subject. They think, when a man undergoes that mysterious and unaccountable thing which is called conversion, the most palpable transformation it makes upon him is to turn him into a psalm-singing, a church-going, an ordinance-keeping, and a prayer-making Christian. They positively do not look for such a change on the common and week-day history of this said convert, as they do on the style and character of his Sabbath observations. But yet there is a something that they will look for on week-days too. They will look for a more decided aspect of sobriety. They will look for a more demure and melancholy seclusion from his old acquaintances. They will look for a clear and total renunciation of all that is intemperate, and of all that is licentious. They will look for a final adieu from those habits of intoxication, or those habits of profligacy, or those habits of companionable indulgence, to which the young of every great city are introduced with a facility and a readiness so alarming to the heart of every Christian parent; and in the prosecution of which they widen by every day of thoughtlessness their departure from God; and accumulate upon them the burden of His righteous indignation; and lull their consciences

into such a slumber, as to thousands and thousands more will at length sink and deepen into the sleep of death; and bring the whole power of their example to bear upon the simple and the uninitiated. And thus does the tide of corruption maintain its unabated force and fulness from one period to another; and is strengthened by yearly contributions out of the wreck of youthful integrity; and did not the cheering light of prophecy assure us that through the omnipotence of a pure gospel better days of reformation and of virtue were to come, one would almost sit down in despair of ever making head against such a torrent of combination and of example on the side of profligacy. Nor is this despair much alleviated, though some solitary case of repentance out of a hundred should now and then be offering itself to our contemplations; and conscience should again lift its commanding voice within him, and be reinstated in that authority which she had lost; and he, breaking off his sins by righteousness, should by an act of simple and determined abandonment brave the mockery of all his associates, and betake himself to the paths of peace and of prayer and of piety.

Now, the all things of our text should lead an enlightened disciple to look for more evidence than this; and should lead a decided convert to exhibit more evidence than this. The man who adorns the gospel in all things, will most certainly be and do all that we have heretofore insisted on. But we regret that it should be so much the impression of the world, and so much the impression even of our plausible and well-looking professors, that these form outward marks of such prominency as to throw all other outward marks into the shade; and to draw an almost exclusive regard towards sobriety of manners, and sobriety of external observation, as forming the great and leading evidences of a now acquired Christianity. Now think what prodigious effect it would give to the gospel, what an impressive testimony to its worth and excellence it would spread around the walk of every professor of it—did all that was undeviating in truth, all that was generous in friendship, all that was manly in principle, all that was untainted in honour, all that was winning in gentleness, all that was endearing in the graces and virtues of domestic society, all that was beneficent in public life, and all that was amiable in the unnoticed recesses of private history—did all these form into one beauteous corona of virtues and accomplishments, which might shed the lustre of Christianity over every field that is traversed by a professor of Christianity. The name

of a convert is at all times most readily associated with sobriety and Sabbath-keeping. We should like that the conduct of the professors were such as to establish a still wider association. And if it is not, it is because professors have so wofully neglected the principle of our text. It is because they have made their Christianity one thing, and their civil business another. It is because they have separated religion from humanity, and missed a truth of most obvious and most commanding evidence—that there is not so much as a single half hour in the whole current of a man's history, which the gospel might not cheer by its comforts, or guide by its rules, or enlighten by its informations and its principles. Had every professing convert proceeded upon this, the association would have gone much farther than it has actually done. It would have thrown a kind of universal emblazonment over the very name of Christianity. A man under the teaching of Jesus Christ could not be spoken of without lighting up in the heart every feeling of confidence and affection and esteem. And only conceive how it would go to augment the power of this living and efficient testimony—did every man who plies his attendance upon church, and runs after sacraments, and whose element is to be hearing and talking of sermons, and the whole style of whose family regulation wears a complexion of sacredness—how it would tell with all the omnipotence of a charm upon the world, could we only have it to say of every such man—that the soul of honour and integrity animated all his doings—that his every word and his every bargain were immutable—that not so much as a flaw or the semblance of an impeachment ever rested on any of his transactions—that if in business, you might repose upon him—that if in company, you had nothing to fear from his pride or his severity or his selfishness—that if in the relations of neighbourhood, you might look for nothing from his hands but kindness and civility—that if in the officialities of public employment, you might see all the faithfulness of a man who felt the weight of duty and responsibility that were attached to it—that if the head of a family, you might behold the happiest attemperament of wisdom and of gentleness—and finally, that if in service, you might commit to him the keepership of your all; you might give your suspicions and your jealousies to the wind; and trusting to a fidelity which no opportunity can tempt, and no power of concealment can make to swerve from the line of honesty, you might review the whole subject of his guardianship, and



find how to its minutest particle that all was untouched and all was unviolated.

This conducts us to the second lesson, which we proposed to draw from the clause of adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. And that is, that it is in the power of men and women, in the most obscure and unnoticed ranks of society, to do a thing of far greater magnificence and glory, than can be done by all the resources of a monarch, by all the commanding influence of wealth, by all the talents and the faculties of genius, by all the magic of utterance pouring forth its streams of eloquent and persuasive reasoning, by all grandeur and all nobility and all official consequence when disjoined from Christian principle. Humble as ye are, ye servants, there is a something ye can do which has all the greatness and all the effect of eternity stamped upon it. There is a something ye can do which the King of Glory may put down as done unto Him, and by which ye can both magnify the name and carry forward the interests of the Sun of Righteousness. There is a something ye can do by which ye may be admitted into the high honour of being fellow-workers with God—by which He to whom all power is committed both in heaven and earth, will own you as the auxiliaries of His cause—by which ye may become the instruments of adding to the triumphs of the great Redeemer, and holding up His name to the world with the splendour of an augmented reputation. O think what a distinction the once crucified but now exalted Saviour has conferred upon you! He has laid the burden of His honour and of His cause upon your shoulders. He has committed to you the task of adorning His doctrine. He has ennobled your every employment, by telling you that out of them all there may arise the moral lustre of such a principle and such a quality, as will reflect a credit upon Himself. And He who has done so much to exalt the station of a servant by taking the form of one on His own person, and by rendering under it such a service to Him who sitteth on the throne, as to have purchased for a sinful world all the securities and all the hopes and all the triumphs of their redemption, comes back upon you servants, now that He is exalted to the right hand of the most High, and tells you how much he looks to you for the glories of His interest and of His name—how much He rests upon you for the illustration and the honour of His doctrine in the world. And as it was the work of the Son of God, when veiled in the humiliation of a servant, which set on foot the great plan of the

world's restoration—so is it still to the work of servants, to you, my humbler brethren, the glories of whose immortal nature lie buried only for a few little years under the meanness and the drudgeries of your daily employment—it is to you that He confides the helping forward of this mighty achievement, and the maintaining of its influence and of its glory from generation to generation.

It is in His name that we address you. We tell you, ye men-servants and ye maid-servants, from the sincerity of a heart that is most thoroughly penetrated with the truth and the importance of what we are now uttering, that you can do more for Christ in your respective families than we can possibly accomplish. We know not who your masters and your mistresses are. But we know that there may be masters who scowl disdainfully on the business of the priesthood. We know that with the insolence of wealth, there may be some who despise the preaching of the cross, and make holiday of our sabbaths and our sacraments. We know that there may be some who come not here to have the doctrine of God our Saviour preached to them; and therefore it is that we want you to do this business for us. You may do it in effect without the utterance of a single word on the subject of Christianity. You may do it by the living power of your example. You may do it by the impressive exhibition of a fidelity which no temptation can seduce, and no lure of gain can cause to swerve from the line of a strict and undeviating integrity. You may do it by a lesson of greater energy than all that human argument can press, or the magic of human eloquence can insinuate. You may let them see in the whole of your history, that the man among all their dependants who is most devoted to the service of the sanctuary, is also the most devoted to the service of his employer; and the most tender of all his interests; and the most observant of all his will. You may preach them a daily sermon by the daily exhibition of your faithfulness, and your attachment, and that deep and duteous spirit of loyalty, which, with all the firm footing of a religious principle in your heart, leads you to be careful of all the trust he has committed to you, and mindful of all his orders, and ever ready to meet his every wish and his every lawful imposition by the alacrity of your most assiduous and devoted ministrations. The kingdom of God is not in word but in power. And even though your master should listen to the every demonstration which issues from the pulpit, he may retire day after day with a charmed ear

and an unawakened conscience, and the whole of the preacher's eloquence may die away from his memory like the sound of a pleasant song. But you keep by him through the week, and a grateful sense of your value is ever forcing itself upon his convictions. And the inference that Christianity has a something of reality in its nature, may at times intrude itself among the multitude of his other thoughts and his other avocations. And his conscience may be arrested by the interesting visitation of such an idea. And that Spirit whom we call you to pray for on his behalf, may reward your example and your supplications by pressing the idea home, and pursuing him with its resistless influence, and opening through its power such an avenue to his heart, as may at length carry before it the whole of his desires and of his purposes. And in like manner as Christianity found its way into the household of Cesar—so may you, my humbler brethren, find out a way for it into the houses of the wealthiest of our citizens; and be the instruments of spreading it around among all those villas of magnificence, which skirt and which adorn the city of our habitation; and to you, clothed as ye are in the habiliments of servitude, and weighed down from morning to night by its drudgeries, and veiled as the greatness of your immortal aspirations is from the eye of the world—even upon you may this blessing in all its richness be realized, that as ye have turned men unto righteousness, so shall ye shine as the stars for ever and ever.

When we think of the lower orders of society, we cannot but think along with it, how high and how noble is the gospel estimate of that importance which belongs to them. Each of them carries in his bosom a principle of deathless energy, never to be extinguished. Each of them has a career of ambition opened up, lofty as heaven and splendid as a crown of immortality. Each of them has an open way to Him who sitteth on the throne, through the mediation of Him who sitteth on the right hand of it. To them belongs the memorable distinction conferred by this utterance of the Eternal Son—that “unto the poor the gospel is preached.” Each of them possesses a heart that may be regenerated by the influences of the Spirit; and may be filled with all that is pure and all that is elevated in piety; and may be turned into a residence for the finest and the loftiest emotions; and that, under the power of an evangelical culture, may be made to exemplify all that is respectable in worth, and all that is endearing in the nobler

graces of Christianity. When worth and greatness meet in one imposing combination, there is a something in a spectacle so rare which draws the general eye of admiration along with it. But to the moral taste of some, and we profess ourselves to be of that number—there is a something still more touching, still more attractive, still more fitted to draw the eye of philanthropy and to fill it with the images of beauty and peacefulness, in what we should call the virtues and the respectabilities of humble life—as a pious father, in the midst of a revering family—or the dutiful offspring who rise around him, and are taught by his example to keep the Sabbaths of the Lord and to love His ordinances—or the well-ordered household, the members of which are trained to all the decencies of Christian conduct—or the frail and lowly tenement, where the voice of psalms is heard with the return of every evening, and the morning of the hallowed day collects all its inmates around the altar of domestic prayer. When such pictures as these occur in humble life, and sure we are that humble life is capable of affording them, who could think of withholding from them his testimony of readiest admiration? The man who, without any superiority of wealth whatever, has, by the pure force of character, gained a moral ascendancy over the population of his obscure neighbourhood, causes all earthly distinctions to vanish into insignificance before him. Now we affirm that in the very poorest and most unnoticed walks of society, such men are to be found; that by the powerful application of Christian motives such men may be multiplied; that there exist throughout the wide mass of society all the imaginable capabilities of worth and excellence and principle and piety; that on the spacious field of a mighty harvest which is on every side of us, there may be raised a whole multitude of converts in whose hearts the principle of the gospel shall have taken up its firm possession, and over the visible path of whose history the power of the gospel may shed the lustre of some of the best and finest accomplishments by which our nature can be adorned.

We must not, however, pursue this speculation any farther. It is in the power of the servants who now hear us, to turn it into a reality. We look to them for the vindication of all we have uttered; and sure we are, that a faithful and an attached servant; one who would maintain unswerving integrity, in the midst of manifold temptations; on whom the struggling force of principle would achieve a victory over the lure of every op-

portunity, and the certainty of every concealment; who, nobly superior to all that is sordid and sneaking and artful, would protect his master's interest as his own, and disdain to touch a single farthing of what was committed to him—why, we should never think of the rank of such a man—we should call him the champion of his order, and feel how honourably he had represented his own class of society—how he had asserted all their honours, and shown how elevation of soul and of sentiment belonged as essentially to them as to the wealthiest and most distinguished of the land—how he had evinced the wondrous capabilities of principle and of improvement which had existed over the wide mass of the population. And, taking him as a specimen, that the whole face of the community might be turned into a moral garden; and that, in point of moral and spiritual importance, the poor, the despised, the unnoticed, the neglected poor, are to the full equal with all that was most lofty in the rank, and all that was most splendid in the literature of society.

We dismiss you, my friends, with the remark—that this is no speculation of ours. It is the call of the Saviour who died for you. It is He who, now that He has achieved your redemption, condescends to ask a favour of you. He commits to you the adornment of His doctrine in the eyes of the world. And remember that when you leave this church, and betake yourselves to the familiarities of your daily employment, though our eye cannot follow you, the eye of your Master in heaven is never away from you. He takes an interest in all your doings. He registers the every hour and performance of your history. If you suffer not this reflection to tell upon your conduct from this moment, you are throwing the gauntlet of defiance to a beseeching and a commanding Saviour. But if otherwise, He will not despise the humble offering of your obedience. He will put it down as done unto Him. He will recognise you as fellow-helpers to His cause and to His interest in the world. He will accept of your prayers, because they are the prayers of them whose hands are clean and whose hearts are purged from their regard to all iniquity. You will grow in friendly and familiar intercourse with the great Mediator; and He will put down the very smallest items of your obedience as fruits of the love that you bear Him, and of the faith which worketh by love and which keepeth the commandments.

## DISCOURSE XV.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT TO SOCIETY.

“What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”—ROMANS iii. 9-19.

THERE are certain of these charges which can be brought more simply and speedily home in the way of conviction than certain others of them. Those which bring man more directly before the tribunal of God, can be made out more easily than those which bring him before the tribunal of his fellows. It were difficult to prove, that, in reference to man, there are not some of the species who have not something to glory of; but it should not be so difficult to prove, that we have nothing to glory of before God. Now, the conclusion of the apostle's argument in this passage is, that it is before God that all the world is guilty; and if we, in the first instance, single out those verses which place man before us in his simple relationship to the God who formed him, we ought not to find it a hard matter to carry the acquiescence of our hearers in the sentence which is here pronounced upon our guilty species.

One of those verses is, that “there is none righteous, no, not one.” To be held as having righteously kept the law of our country, we must keep the whole of it. It is not necessary that we accumulate upon our persons the guilt of treason, and forgery, and murder, and violent depredation, ere we forfeit our lives to an outraged government. By one of these acts we incur just as dreadful and as entire a forfeiture as though guilty of them all. The hundred deeds of obedience will not efface or expiate the

one of disobedience; and we have only to plead for the same justice to a Divine that we render to a human administration, in order to convince every individual who now hears us, conscious, as he must be, of one, and several, and many acts of transgression against the law of God, that there is not one of them who is righteous before Him.

“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God,” is another of these verses. We will venture to say of every man, without exception, who has not submitted himself to the great doctrine of this Epistle, which is justification by faith, that there is not one principle clearly intelligible even to his own mind, on which he rests his acceptance with the God whom he has offended. He may have some obscure conception of His mercy, but he has never struck the compromise between His mercy and His justice. He has never braved the inquiry, how is it possible that a sinner can be pardoned without a dissolution of God’s moral government? If he has ever taken up the question, “What shall I do to be saved?” he has never, in the prosecution of it, looked steadily in the face at the Truth and Holiness of the Godhead. He has never extricated his condition as a sinner, from the dilemma of God’s conflicting attributes; or apprehended, to his own satisfaction, how it is that the dignity of Heaven’s throne can be upheld, amid the approaches of the polluted, who dare the inspection of eternal purity, and offer to come nigh, on the single presumption of God’s connivance at sin,—and a connivance founded, too, on the vague impression of God’s simple, and easy, and unresisting tenderness. What becomes of all that which stamps authority upon a law, and props the majesty of a Lawgiver, is a question that they have not resolved; and that just because it is a question which they do not entertain. They are not seeking to resolve it. That matter which appertains to the very essence of a sinner’s salvation, is a matter of which they have no understanding; and they do not care to understand it. They are otherwise taken up, and giving themselves no uneasiness upon the subject. They, all their lives long, are blinking, and evading the questions which lie at the very turning-point of that transition by which a sinner passes from a state of wrath into a state of acceptance. They hold the whole of this matter in abeyance; and the things of the world engross, and interest, and occupy, their whole hearts, to the utter exclusion of Him who made the world. They are seeking after many things, but they are not

seeking after God. If you think that this is bearing too hard upon you, tell us what have been the times, and what the occasions, on which you have ever made the finding of God the distinct and the business object of your endeavours? When did you ever seek Him truly? When did your efforts in this way ever go beyond the spirit and the character of an empty round of observations? What are the strenuous attempts you ever made to push the barrier which intercepts the guilty from the God whom they have rebelled against? If you are really and heartily seeking, you will find; but, without the fear of refutation, do we affirm of all here present who have not reached the Saviour, and are not in their way to Him, that none of you understandeth, and none of you seeketh after God.

“They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good; no, not one,” is another of these verses. We do not say of the people whom we are now addressing, that they have gone out of the way of honour, or out of the way of equity, or out of the way of fair and pleasant and companionable neighbourhood. But they, one and all of them, are out of the way of godliness. When the Prophet complains of our species, he does not affirm of them that they had turned every one to a way either of injustice or cruelty; but he counts it condemnation enough, that they had turned every one to *his own way*. It is iniquity enough in his eyes that the way in which we walk is our own way, and not God’s; that in the prosecution of it we are simply pleasing ourselves, and not asking or caring whether it be a way that is pleasing to Him; that the impelling principle of what we do is our own will, and not His authority; that the way in which we walk is a way of independence upon God, if not of iniquity against our fellows in society; that it is the way of one who walks in the sight of his own eyes, and not of one who walks under the sight and in the service of another; that God, in fact, is as good as cast off from us; and we say what is tantamount to this, that we will not have Him to reign over us. This is the universal habit of Nature; and if so, Nature is out of the way, and the world at large offers a monstrous exception to the habit of the sinless and unfallen, where all, from the highest to the lowest, walk in that rightful subordination which the thing that is formed should ever have towards Him who formed it. It is this which renders all the works of mere natural men so unprofitable, that is, of no value in the highest count and reckoning of



eternity. They want the great moral infusion which makes them valuable. There is nothing of God in them; having neither His will for their principle, nor the advancement of any one cause which His heart is set upon for their object. They may serve a temporary purpose. They may shed a blessing over the scenery of our mortal existence. They may minister to the good, and the peace, and the protection of society. They may add to the sunshine or the serenity of our little day upon earth; and yet be unprofitable, because they yield no fruit unto immortality. Destitute as they all are of godliness, they are destitute of goodness. They have not the essential spirit of this attribute pervading them. And though many there are to whom the preaching of the cross is foolishness, and who have reached a lofty estimation in the walks of integrity and honour, and even of philanthropy and patriotism, yet, with the taint of earthliness which vitiates all they do, in the estimation of Heaven's Sanctuary there is none of them that doeth good; no, not one.

We now pass onward to another set of charges, which it may not be so easy to substantiate on the ground of actual observation. They consist of highly atrocious offences against the peace and the dearest interests of society. It is true that the apostle here drops the style of universality which he so firmly sustains in the foregoing part of his arraignment, when he speaks of all being out of the way; and of none, no, not one being to be found on the path of godliness. And it is further true, that, in the subsequent prosecution of his charges, he quotes several expressions which David made use of, not against the whole species, but against his own enemies. But yet it will be found, that though the picture of atrocity here drawn may not in our day be so broadly exhibited as in the ruder and more barbarous periods of this world's history, yet, that the principles of it are still busily at work; that though humanity be altered a little in its guise, it is not, apart from the gospel, at all altered in its substance; that though softened down into a somewhat milder complexion, its fiercer elements are not therefore extinguished, but only lie for a time in a sort of slumbering concealment; that though law and civilisation, and a more enlightened sense of interest, may have stopped the mouth of many a desolating volcano, which would else have marred and wasted the face of society, yet do the fiery materials still exist in the bosom of society. It is religion alone which will kill the elementary

principles of human wickedness, and every expedient short of religion will do no more than restrain the ebullition of them. So that, dark as the scriptural representation of our nature is; and though here personified by the apostle into a monster, whose delight is in the most foul and revolting abominations; with a throat like an open sepulchre, emitting contempt, and hatred, and envy, and everything offensive; and a tongue practised in the arts of deceitfulness; and lips from which the gall of malignity ever drops in unceasing distillation; and a mouth full of venomous asperity; and feet that run to assassination as a game; and with the pathway on which she runs marked by the ruin and distress that attend upon her progress; and with a disdainful aversion in her heart to the safety and ingloriousness of peace; and, finally, with an aspect of defiance to the God that called her into being, and gave all her parts and all her energies—though this sketch of our nature was originally taken by the Psalmist from the prowling banditti that hovered on the confines of Judea, yet has the apostle, by admitting it into his argument, stamped a perpetuity upon it, and made it universal—giving us to understand, that if such was the character of man, as it stood nakedly out among the rude and resentful hostilities of a barbarous people, such also is the real character of man among the glosses, and the regularities, and the monotonous decencies of modern society.

There is one short illustration which may help you to comprehend this. You know that oaths were more frequent at one time than they are now in the conversation of the higher classes, and that at present it is altogether a point of politeness to abstain from the utterance of them. It is a point of politeness, we fear, more than a point of piety. There may be less of profaneness in their mouths, while there may be as much as ever in their hearts; and when the question is between God and man, and with a view to rate the godliness of the latter, do you think that this is at all alleviated by a mere revolution of taste about the proprieties of fashionable intercourse? There may be as little of religion in the discontinuance of swearing, when that is brought about by a mere fluctuation in the mode or *bon ton* of society, as there is of religion in the adoption of a new dress, or a new style of entertainment. And, in like manner, murder in the act may be less frequent now, while, if he who hateth his brother be a murderer, it may be fully as foul and frequent in the principle; and theft, in the shape of violent and open depre-

dation, be no longer practised by him who gives vent to an equal degree of dishonesty through the chicaneries of merchandise; and that malice which wont in other times to pour itself forth in resentful outcry, or vulgar execration, may now find its sweet and secret gratification in the conquests of a refined policy; and thus may there lurk under the soft and placid disguises of well-bred citizenship, just as much of unfeeling deceit, and unfeeling cruelty, as were ever realized in the fiercer contests of savage warfare, so as to verify the estimate of our apostle, even when applied to the character of society in modern days, and to make it as evident with the duties of the second table as it is with the first, that in everything man has wandered far from the path of rectitude, and in everything has fallen short of the glory of God.

The truth is, there is much in the whole guise of modern society that is fitted to hide from human eyes the real deformity of the human character. We think that, apart from Christianity, the falsehood and the ferocity of our species are essentially the same with what they were in the most unsettled periods of its history—that, however moulded into a different form, they retain all the strength and substance that they ever had—and that, if certain restraints were lifted away, certain regulations which have their hold not upon the principle, but upon the selfishness of our nature; then would the latent propensities of man again break forth into open exhibition, and betray him to be the same guileful, and rapacious, and vindictive creature he has ever shown himself to be, in those places of the earth where government had not yet introduced its restraints, and civilisation had not yet introduced its disguises.

And even when society has sat down into the form of a peaceful and well-ordered commonwealth, will it be seen that the evil of the human heart, though it come not forth so broadly and so outrageously as before, is just as active in its workings, and just as unsubdued in its principle as ever. We apprehend that man to be mainly ignorant of life, and to be unpractised or untaught among the collisions of human intercourse, who is not aware that even among our politest circles, smoothed as they may be into perfect decorum, and graced by the smile of soft and sentimental courtesy, there may lurk all the asperities and heartburnings so honestly set forth by our apostle; and that even there the artful malignity of human passion finds, in slanderous insinuations, and the devices of a keen and dexterous

rivalry, its effectual vent for them. And little has he experienced of the trick and treachery of business, who thinks that, in the scramble of its eager competitions, less deceit is now used with the tongue, than in the days when the Psalmist was compassed round with the snares of his adversaries. And slightly has he reflected on the true character that often beams out from beneath the specious fallacy which lies over it, who does not perceive that there may, even with law, be as determined a spirit of injustice, among the frauds and the forms of bankruptcy, as that which in the olden time, and without law, carried violence and rapine into a neighbour's habitation. And there is a lack of insight with him who thinks, that in civilized war, with all its gallant courtesies, and all its manifestos of humane and righteous protestation, there may not be the same kindling for the fray, and the same appetite for blood, that gives its fell and revengeful sweep to the tomahawk of Indians. There is another dress and another exterior upon society than before; but be assured, that in so far as it respects the essentials of human character the representation of the apostle is still the true one. Whatever were the deceitful, or whatever were the murderous propensities of man, three thousand years ago, they have descended to our present generation; and we are not sure but that, through the regular vents of war, and of bankruptcy, there is as full scope for their indulgence as ever. There may be a change in the mode of these iniquities, without any change at all in the matter of them; and after all that police, and refinement, and the kindly operation of long pacific intercourse, have done to humanize the aspect of these latter days, we are far from sure whether upon the displacement of certain guards and barriers of security, the slumbering ferocities of man might not again announce their existence, and break out, as before, into open and declared violence.

All this, while it gives a most humiliating estimate of our species, should serve to enhance to our minds the blessings of regular Government. And it were curious to question the agents of police upon this subject, the men who are stationed at the place of combat and of guardianship, with those who have cast off the fear of God, and cast off also the fear of man to such a degree, as to be ever venturing across the margin of human legality. Let the most observant of all these public functionaries simply deponé to the effect it would have, even upon our mild and modern society, were this guardianship dissolved. Would

it not be evident to him, and is it not equally evident to you all, that the artificial gloss which now overspreads the face of it would speedily be dissipated; and that, underneath, would the character of man be sure to stand out in far nearer resemblance to that sketch, however repulsive, which the inspired writer has here offered of our species? Were anarchy the order of our day, and the lawless propensities of man permitted to stalk abroad in this the season of their wild emancipation; were all the restraints of order driven in, and human strength and human fierceness were to ride in triumph over the prostrate authorities of the land; were the reigning will of our country, at this moment, the will of a spontaneous multitude, doing every man of them, in rude and random ebullitions, what was right in his own eyes, with just a fear of our heavenly superior as now exists in the world, but with all fear and reverence for earthly superiors taken away from it; let us just ask you to conceive the effect of such a state of things, and then to compute how little there is of moral, and how much there is of mere animal restraint in the apparent virtues of human society. There is a twofold benefit in such a contemplation. It will enhance to every Christian mind the cause of loyalty, and lead him to regard the power that is, as the minister of God to him for good. And it will also guide him through many delusions to appreciate justly the character of man; to distinguish aright between the semblance of principle and its reality; and to gather, from the surveys of experience, a fresh evidence for the truth of those Scriptures which speak so truly of human sinfulness, and point out so clearly the way of human salvation.

But it is not necessary, for the purpose of identifying the character of man, as it now is, with what the character of man was, in its worst features, in the days of the Royal Psalmist, to make out by evidence a positive thirst after blood on the part of any existing class in society. We are not sure that it was any native or abstract delight in cruelty which prompted the marauders of other days to deeds of violence. Place a man in circumstances of ease and of self-complacency, and he will revolt from the infliction of unnecessary pain, just as the gorged and satiated animal of prey will suffer the traveller to pass without molestation. It forms no part of our indictment against the species, that his appetite for blood urges him onwards to barbarity, but that his appetite for other things will urge him on to it; and that if, while he had these things, he would rather abstain from

the death of his fellow-men, yet, rather than want these things, he would inflict it. It is not that his love of cruelty is the originating appetite which carries him forward to deeds of cruelty, but that his abhorrence of cruelty is not enough to arrest the force of other appetites, when they find that human life lies in the way of their gratification. The feet of the borderers of Judea made haste to shed blood; but just because, like the borderers of our own land, their love of booty could only be indulged with human resistance among human habitations. And were these days of public licentiousness again to return—were the functions of government suspended, and the only guarantee of peace and of property were the native rectitude of the species—did the power of anarchy achieve its own darling object of a jubilee all over the country for human wilfulness; and in this way were, not the past inclinations revived, but just the present inclinations of man let loose upon society—a single month would not elapse, ere scenes of as dread atrocity were witnessed, as those which the Psalmist has recorded, and those which the apostle has transmitted, as the exemplars, not of practical, but of general humanity. The latent iniquities of the human heart would reappear just as soon as the compression of human authority was lifted away from them; and these streets be made to flow with the blood of the most distinguished of our citizens; and the violence at first directed against the summit of society, would speedily cause the whole frame of it to totter into dissolution; and in this our moral and enlightened day it would be found, that there was enough of crime in the country to spread terror over all its provinces, and to hold its prostrate families in bondage; and with such a dreary interregnum of tumult, and uproar, and vagrancy, as this, would there be a page of British history as deeply crimsoned over, as are the darkest annals of the barbarity of our species—all proving how indispensable the ordinance of human government is to the well-being of society; but also proving, that if it be the will, and the inward tendency, and the unfettered principle, which constitute the real elements of the character of man, this character has only been coloured into another hue, without being transformed into another essence, by an ordinance which can only keep its elements in check, but never can extinguish them.

And on applying the spiritual touchstone of the gospel, may we perhaps fasten a similar charge on many in society, who never suspected it possible that they had any part in the apostle's

dark representation of our foul and fallen nature. Even in the wildest scenes of anarchy, it may not be the love of cruelty, but the love of power or of plunder, which leads men to the most revolting abominations of cruelty. It is not so much a ravenous desire after human blood, as a regardlessness about it, which stamps a savage barbarity on the characters of men. It is their regard for the objects of avarice and ambition, coupled with their regardlessness about the quantity of human life, that lies in the way of them; which is enough to account for deeds of atrocity as monstrous as ever were committed, either by bloody tyrants, or ferocious multitudes. Now, may not this regard on the one hand, and this regardlessness on the other, be fully exemplified by him who looks with delight on the splendid reversion that awaits him, and cares not how soon the death of his aged relative may bring it to his door? And may it not be exemplified by him who, all in a tumult with military glee, and the visions of military glory, longs for some arena crowded with the fellows of his own sentient nature, on which he might bring the fell implements of destruction to bear, and so signalize himself in the proud lists of chivalry or patriotism? And most striking of all, perhaps, may it not be exemplified, by the most gentle and pacific of our citizens, who, engrossed with the single appetite of fear, and under the movements of no other regard than a regard to his own security, might listen with secret satisfaction to the tale of the many hundreds of the rebellious who had fallen—and how the sweep of fatal artillery, or the charge of victorious squadrons, told with deadly execution on the flying multitude? We are not comparing the merits of the cause of order, which are all triumphant, with those of anarchy; the inscribed ensigns of which are as hateful to every Christian eye, as ever to the Jews of old was the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet. We are merely expounding the generalities of a nature, trenched upon every side of it in deceitfulness; and where, under the gloss of many plausibilities, there lurk, unsuspected and unknown, all the rudiments of depravity; and through the intricacies of which, he who saw with the eye of inspiration could detect a permanent and universal taint, both of selfishness and of practical atheism. The picture that he has drawn will bear to be confronted with the humanity of modern as well as of ancient days; and, though taken off at first from the ruder specimens of our kind, yet, on a narrow inspection, will it be found to be substantiated among the deli-

cate phases of our more elegant and artificial society ; so as that every mouth should be stopped, and the whole world be brought in guilty before God.

In looking to the present aspect of society, it is not easy so to manage our argument as to reach conviction among all, that all are guilty before God ; and that, unknowing of it themselves, there may be the lurking principles of what is dire in human atrocity, even under the blandest exhibitions of our familiar and every-day acquaintanceship. But as there are degrees of guilt, and as these are more or less evident to human eyes, it would, perhaps, decide the identity of our present generation with those of a rude and savage antiquity, could we run along the scale of actual wickedness that is before us, and fasten upon an exemplification of it so plainly and obviously detestable as to vie with all that is recorded of the villany of our species in former ages of the world. And such a one has occurred so recently, that there is not one here present who, upon the slightest allusion, will not instantly recognise it. We speak not of those who have openly spoken, and that beyond the margin of legality, against the government of our land. We speak not of those who have clamoured so loudly, and lifted so open a front of hostility to the laws, as to have brought down upon them the hand of public vengeance. We speak not even of those who, steeled to the purposes of blood, went forth to kill and to destroy, and, found with the implements of violence in their hands, are now awaiting the sentence of an earthly tribunal on the enormity into which they have fallen. But we speak to our men of deeper contrivance ; to those wary and unseen counselors who have so coolly conducted others to the brunt of a full exposure, and then retired so cautiously within the shelter of their own cowardice ; those men of print and of plot, and of privacy, in whose hands the other agents of rebellion were nothing better than slaves and simpletons ; those men of skill enough for themselves, to go thus far and no farther, and of cruelty enough for others, as to care not how many they impelled across the verge of desperation ; those men who have made their own harvest of the passions of the multitude, and now skulk in their hiding-places, till the storm of vengeance that is to sweep the victims of their treachery from the land of the living shall have finally blown away ; those men who spoke a patriotism which they never felt, and shed their serpent tears over sufferings which never drew from their bosoms one sigh of



honest tenderness. Tell us, if, out of the men who thus have trafficked in delusion, and in pursuance of their unfeeling experiment have entailed want and widowhood upon families, there may not as dark a picture of humanity be drawn as the Psalmist drew out of the rude materials that were around him : And after all that civilisation has done for our species, and all that smoothness of external aspect into which government has moulded the form of society ; is it not evident, that upon the slightest relaxation of its authority, and the faintest prospect of its dissolution and overthrow, there is lying in reserve as much of untamed and ruthless ferocity in our land, as, if permitted to come forth, would lift an arm of bloody violence, and scatter all the cruelties of the Reign of Terror among its habitations ?\*

These are rather lengthened illustrations in which we have indulged ; but who can resist the temptation that offers itself, when an opening is given for exhibiting the accordancy that obtains between the truths of observation, and the averments of Scripture ; when facts are before us, and such a use of them can be made, as that of turning them into materials by which to strengthen the foundations of orthodoxy ; and when, out of scenes which rise with all the freshness of recency before us, it can be shown how the sturdy apostolic doctrine will bear to be confronted with every new display, and every new development of human experience ? And, ere we have done, we should like to urge three lessons upon you, from all that has been said ; the first with a view to set your theology upon its right basis ; and the second with a view to set your loyalty upon its right basis ; and the third with a view to impress a right practical movement on those who hold a natural or political ascendancy in our land.

I.—First, then, as to the theology of this question. We trust you perceive how much it is, and how little it is, that can be gathered from the comparative peace and gentleness of modern society ; how much the protection of families is due to the physical restraints that are laid on by this world's government, and how little is due to the moral restraints that are laid on by the unseen government of Heaven ; how little the existing safety of our commonwealth, both from crime and turbulence, is owing to the force of any considerations which are addressed to the principle of man, and how much of it is owing to the force

\* This Sermon was preached in 1820, after the suppression of a rebellious movement in Scotland.

of such considerations as are addressed to man's fears and man's selfishness;—all proving, that if human nature, in this our age, do not break forth so frequently and so outrageously into violence as in other ages that have gone by, it is only because it is shackled, and not because it is tamed. It is more like the tractableness of an animal led about by a chain, than of an animal inwardly softened into a docility and a mildness which did not formerly belong to it. It is due, without doubt, to the influence of a very strong and very salutary counteraction; but it is a counteraction that has been formed out of the interest of man, and not out of the fear of God. It is due, not to the working of that celestial machinery which bears on the spiritual part of our constitution, but to the working of another machinery most useful for the temporary purpose which it serves, yet only bearing on the material and worldly part of our constitution. On this point, observation and orthodoxy are at one; and one of the most convincing illustrations which the apostle can derive to his own doctrine, may be taken from the testimony of those who, in the shape of legal functionaries, are ranged along that line of defence over which humanity, with its numerous outbreaks of fraud, and rapacity, and violence, is ever passing. Let them simply aver, on their own experimental feeling, what the result would be, if all the earthly safeguards of law and of government were driven away from the rampart at which they are stationed; and they are just preaching orthodoxy to our ears, and lending us their authority to one of its articles, when they tell us that upon such an event the whole system of social life would go into unbingement, and that, in the wild uproar of human passions which would follow, kindness, and confidence, and equity, would take their rapid flight from human habitations.

II.—But, secondly, the very same train of argument which goes to enlighten the theology of this subject, serves also to deepen and to establish within us all the principles of a most devoted loyalty. That view of the human character, upon which it is contended, by the divine, that unless it is regenerated there can be no meetness for heaven, is the very same with that view of the human character upon which it is contended, by the politician, that unless it is restrained there will be no safety from crime and violence along the course of the pilgrimage which leads to it. An enlightened Christian recognises the hand of God in all the shelter that is thrown over him from the fury of the natural elements; and he equally recognises it in all the

shelter that is thrown over him from the fury of the moral elements by which he is surrounded. Had he a more favourable view of our nature, he might not look on government as so indispensable; but, with the view that he actually has, he cannot miss the conclusion of its being the ordinance of Heaven for the church's good upon earth; and that thus a canopy of defence is drawn over the heads of Zion's travellers; and they rejoice in the authority of human laws as an instrument in the hand of God for the peace of their Sabbaths, and the peace of their sacraments; and they deprecate the anarchy that would ensue from the suspension of them, with as much honest principle, as they would deprecate the earthquake that might engulf, or the hurricane that might sweep away their habitations; and, aware of what humanity is, when left to itself, they accept as a boon from heaven the mechanism which checks the effervescence of all those fires that would else go forth to burn up and to destroy.

This, at all times the feeling of every enlightened Christian, must have been eminently and peculiarly so at that time when our recent alarms were at the greatest height. It was the time of our sacrament; and to all who love its services must it have been matter of grateful rejoicing, that by the favour of Him who sways the elements of Nature, and the as uncontrollable elements of human society, we were permitted to finish these services in peace; that, in that feast of love and good-will, we were not rudely assailed by the din of warlike preparation; that, ere Sabbath came, the tempest of alarm, which had sounded so fearfully along the streets of our city, was hushed into the quietness of Sabbath; so that, like as if in the midst of sweetest landscape, and amongst a congregation gathered out of still and solitary hamlets, and with nothing to break in upon the deep repose and tranquillity of the scene, save the voice of united praise, from an assembly of devout and revering worshippers, were we, under the protection of an arm stronger than any arm of flesh, and at the bidding of a voice more powerful than that of mighty conquerors, suffered to enjoy the pure and peaceful ordinances of our faith, with all the threats and all the outcries of human violence kept far away from us.

It was the apprehension of many, that it might have been otherwise. And, what ought to be their enduring gratitude, when, instead of the wrath of man let loose upon our families, and a devoted city given up to the frenzy and the fierceness of

a misguided population ; and the maddening outcry of combatants plying against each other their instruments of destruction ; and the speed of flying multitudes, when the noise of the footmen and the noise of the horsemen gave dreadful intimation of the coming slaughter ; and the bursting conflagration, in various quarters, marking out where the fell emissaries of ruin were at work ; and the shock, and the volley, and the agonies of dying men, telling the trembling inmates of every household, that the work of desperation had now begun upon the streets, and might speedily force its way into all the dwelling-places :—this is what that God, who has the elements of the moral world at command, might have visited on a town which has witnessed so many a guilty sabbath, and harbours within its limits the ungodliness of so many profane and alienated families—In what preciousness, then, ought that sabbath to be held ; and what a boon from the kindness of long-suffering Heaven should we regard its quietness ; when, instead of such deeds of vengeance between townsmen and their fellows, they walked together in peaceful society to the house of prayer, and sat in peacefulness together at its best-loved ordinance.

The men who prize the value of this protection the most, are the men who feel most the need of human government, and who most revere it as an ordinance of God. Such is their opinion of the heart, that they believe, unless it be renewed by Divine grace, there can be no translation into a blessed eternity ; and such is their opinion of the heart, that they believe, unless its native inclinations be repressed by human government, there can be no calm or protected passage along the track of conveyance in this world. Their loyalty emerges from their orthodoxy. With them it has all the tenacity of principle ; and is far too deeply seated to be laid prostrate among the fierce and guilty agitations of the tumultuous. They have no part in the rancour of the disaffected ; and they have no part in the ambitiousness of the dark and daring revolutionist ; and seeking, as they do, to lead a quiet and a peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty, a season of turbulence is to them a season of trial, and would be a season of difficulty, had they not the politics of the Bible to guide their way among the threats and the terrors of surrounding desperadoes. “ Honour the king, and meddle not with those who are given to change,” are the indelible duties of a record that is indelible ; and they stamp a sacredness upon Christian loyalty. They are not at liberty to cancel what God has enacted,

and to expunge what God has written. They are loyal because they are religious; to suffer in such a cause is persecution, to die in it is martyrdom.

There is a mischievous delusion on this subject. In the minds of many, and these too men of the first influence and station in the country, there is a haunting association which still continues to mislead them, even in the face of all evidence, and of all honest and credible protestation; and in virtue of which they, to this very hour, conceive that such a religion as they call Methodism, is the invariable companion of a plotting, artful, and restless democracy. This is truly unfortunate; for the thing called Methodism is neither more nor less than Christianity in earnest; and yet they who so call it, have it most honestly at heart to promote the great object of a peaceful, and virtuous, and well-conditioned society; and not therefore their disposition, which is right, but their apprehension upon this topic, which is egregiously wrong, has just had the effect of bending the whole line of their patronage and policy the wrong way. And thus are they unceasingly employed in attempting to kill, as a noxious plant, the only element which can make head against the tide of irreligion and blasphemy in our land; conceiving, but most wofully wide of the truth in so conceiving, that there is a certain approving sympathy between the sanctity of the evangelical system, and the sedition that so lately has derided and profaned it. The doctrinal Christianity of this very epistle would be called methodistical by those to whom we are now alluding; but sure we are, that the disciple who goes along with Paul, while he travels in argument through the deeper mysteries of faith, will not abandon him when, in the latter chapters of his work, he breaks forth into that efflorescence of beautiful and perfect morality with which he winds up the whole of his wondrous demonstration; but will observe the bidden conduct as a genuine emanation of the expounded creed—when told, that every soul should be subject unto the higher powers, and that there is no power but of God, and that the powers which be are ordained of God. And whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

III.—We venture to affirm, that it is just the want of this Christianity in earnest which has brought our nation to the brink of an emergency so fearful as that upon which we are

standing. When Solomon says, that it is righteousness which exalteth a nation, he means something of a deeper and more sacred character than the mere righteousness of society. This last may be learned in the school of classical or of civil virtue; and an argument may be gathered in its behalf even from the views of an enlightened selfishness; and, all lovely as it is in exhibition, may it draw from the tasteful admirers of what is fine in character even something more than a mere nominal acknowledgment. It may carry a certain extent of practical conformity over the real and living habits of those who, faultless in honour, and uprightness, and loyalty, are nevertheless devoid of the religious principle altogether; and who, so far from being tainted with methodism, in the sense of that definition which we have already given of it, would both repudiate its advances upon their own family, and regret any visible inroads it might make on our general population.

That Solomon does mean something more than the virtues to which we are now alluding, is evident, we think, from this circumstance. The term "righteousness" admits of a social and relative application, and, in this application, may introduce a conception into the mind that is exclusive of God. But the same cannot be said of the term "sin." This generally suggests the idea of God as the Being sinned against. The one term does not so essentially express the idea of conformity to the Divine law, as the other term expresses the idea of transgression against it. It does not carry up the mind so immediately to God; because, with the utter absence of Him from our thoughts, may it still retain a substance and a significancy, as expressive of what is held to be right in a community of human beings. It is well, then, that the clause, "Righteousness exalteth a nation," is followed up by the clause, "But sin is a reproach to any people;" and that thus the latter term, which is equivalent to ungodliness, by the contrast in which it stands with the former term, leads us to the true import of the first of these two clauses, and gives us to understand Solomon as saying, That it is godliness that exalteth a nation.

Cut away the substratum of godliness, and how, we ask, will the secondary and the earth-born righteousness be found to thrive on the remaining soil which nature supplies for rearing it? It is an error to think that it will make a total withdrawal of itself from the world. It will still be found, in straggling specimens, among some sheltered and congenial spots even of this

world's territory—at times among the haunts of lettered enthusiasm; and at times on the elevated stage of a rank which stands forth to public notice, or of an opulence which is raised above the attacks of care and of temptation; and, at times, on the rarely-occurring mould of a native equity, when, in middle and comfortable life, the rude urgencies of want and of vulgar ambition do not overbear it. Even there it will grow but sparingly, without the influences of the gospel; as it did in those ages, and as it still does in those countries where the gospel is unknown. But if you step down from those moral eminences, or if you come out from those few sweet and kindred retirements, where the moral verdure has stood, unblighted, even in the absence of Christianity, and thence go forth among the ample spaces, and the wide, and open, and general exposures of society; if, on the arena of common life, you enter the teeming families of the poor, and hold converse with the mighty host who scarcely know an interval between waking hours of drudgery and hours of sleeping unconsciousness; if, passing away from the abodes of refinement, you mingle with the many whose feelings and whose faculties are alike buffeted in the din and the dizzying of incessant labour—we mean to affix no stigma on the humbler brethren of our nature; but we may at least be suffered to say, that among the richest of fortune and accomplishment in our land, we know not the individual whose virtues, if transplanted into the unkindlier region of poverty, would have withstood the operation of all the adverse elements to which it is exposed—unless upheld by that very godliness which he perhaps disowns, that very methodism on which perhaps he pours the cruelty of his derision.

And here it may be remarked, how much the taste of many among the higher orders of society, is at war with the best security that can be devised for the peace and the well-being of society. There are many among them who admire the blossoms of virtue, while they dislike that only culture which can spread this lovely efflorescence over the whole field of humanity. They advert not to this—that the virtue which is cradled in the lap of abundance, and is blown into luxuriance among the complacencies of a heart at ease, would soon evince its frailty were it carried out among the exposures of an every-day world; that there it would droop and perish under the uncongenial influences which, apart from religion, would positively wither up all the honesties and delicacies of humble life; and, therefore, that if they nauseate that gospel, which ever meets with its best acceptance, and works

its most signal effects upon the poor, they abandon the poor to that very depravity into which they themselves, had they been placed among the same temptations and besetting urgencies, would assuredly have fallen. The force of native integrity may do still what it did in the days of pagan antiquity, when it reared its occasional specimens of worth and patriotism; but it is the power of godliness, and that alone, which will reclaim our population in the length and breadth of it, and shed a moral bloom and a moral fragrance over the wide expanse of society. But with many, and these too the holders of a great and ascendant influence in our land, godliness is puritanism, and orthodoxy is repulsive moroseness, and the pure doctrine of the apostles is fanatical and disgusting vulgarity; and thus is it a possible thing, that in their hands the alone aliment of public virtue may be withheld, or turned into poison. Little are they aware of the fearful reaction which may await their natural enmity to the truth as it is in Jesus; and grievously have they been misled from the sound path, even of political wisdom, in the suspicion and intolerance wherewith they have regarded the dispensers of the Word of Life among the multitude. The patent way to disarm nature of her ferocities, is to Christianize her; and we should look on all our alarms with thankfulness, as so many salutary indications, did they lead either to multiply the religious edifices, or to guide the religious patronage of our land.

But, again, it is not merely the taste of the higher orders which may be at war with the best interests of our country. It is also their example; not their example of dishonesty, not their example of disloyalty, not their example of fierce and tumultuous violence, but an example of that which, however unaccompanied with any one of these crimes in their own person, multiplies them all upon the person of the imitators—we mean the example of their irreligion. A bare example of integrity on the part of a rich man, who is freed from all temptations to the opposite, is not an effective example with a poor man, who is urgently beset at all hands with these temptations. It is thus that the most pure and honourable example which can shine upon the poor from the upper walks of society, of what we have called the secondary and the earth-born righteousness, will never counterwork the mischief which emanates from the example that is there held forth of ungodliness. It is the poor man's sabbath which is the source of his week-day virtues. The rich may have other sources; but take away the sabbath from the poor,



and you inflict a general desecration of character upon them. Taste, and honour, and a native love of truth, may be sufficient guarantees for the performance of duties to the breaking of which there is no temptation. But they are not enough for the wear and exposure of ordinary life. They make a feeble defence against such temptations as assail and agitate the men who, on the rack of their energies, are struggling for subsistence. With them the relative obligations hold more singly upon the religious; and if the tie of religion, therefore, be cut asunder, the whole of their morality will forthwith go into unhingement. Whatever virtue there is on the humbler levels of society, it holds direct of the sabbath and of the sanctuary; and when these cease to be venerable, the poor cease to be virtuous. You take away all their worth, when you take away the fear of God from before their eyes; and why then should we wonder at the result of a very general depravation among them, if before their eyes there should be held forth, on the part of their earthly superiors, an utter fearlessness of God? The humbler, it ought not to be expected, will follow the higher classes on the ground of social virtue; for they have other and severer difficulties to combat, and other temptations, over which the victory would be greatly more arduous. But the humbler will follow the higher on the ground of irreligion. Only they will do it in their own style, and, perhaps, with the more daring and lawless spirit of those who riot in the excesses of a newly felt liberty. Should the merchant, to lighten the pressure of work in his counting-house, make over the arrears of his week-day correspondence to the snug and secret opportunity of the coming sabbath—the hard wrought labourer just follows up this example in his own way, when, not to lighten, but to solace the fatigue of the six days that are past, he spends the seventh in some haunt of low dissipation. Should the man of capital make his regular escape from the dull Sunday, and the still duller sermon, by a rural excursion with his party of choice spirits, to the villa of weekly retreat, which by his wealth he has purchased and adorned—let it not be wondered at, that the man of drudgery is so often seen, with his band of associates, among the suburb fields and pathways of our city; or that the day which God hath commanded to be set apart for Himself, should be set apart by so vast a multitude, who pour forth upon our outskirts, to the riot and extravagance of holiday. Should it be held indispensable for the accommodation of our higher citizens, that the great central

lounge of politics, and periodicals, and news, be opened on Sabbath to receive them; then, though the door of public entry is closed, and with the help of screens, and hangings, and partial shutters, something like an homage is rendered to public decency, and the private approach is cunningly provided, and all the symptoms of sneaking and conscious impropriety are spread over the face of this guilty indulgence—let us not wonder, though the strength of example has forced its way through the impotency of all these wretched barriers, and that the reading-rooms of sedition and infidelity are now open every Sabbath for the behoof of our general population. Should the high-bred city gentleman hold it foul scorn to have the raillery of the pulpit thus let loose upon his habits, or that any parson who fills it should so presume to tread upon his privileges—let us no longer wonder, if this very language, and uttered, too, in this very spirit, be re-echoed by the sour and sturdy Radical, who, equal to his superior in the principle of ungodliness, only outpeers him in his expressions of contempt for the priesthood, and of impetuous defiance to all that wears the stamp of authority in the land. It is thus that the impiety of our upper classes now glares upon us from the people, with a still darker reflection of impiety back again; and that, in the general mind of our country, there is a suppressed but brooding storm, the first elements of which were injected by the men who now tremble the most under the dread of its coming violence.

It is the decay of vital godliness amongst us, that has brought on this great moral distemper. It is irreligion which palpably lies at the bottom of it. Could it only have confined its influences among the sons of wealth or of lettered infidelity, society might have been safe. But this was impossible; and now that it has broke forth on the wide and populous domain of humanity, is it seen that, while a slender and sentimental righteousness might have sufficed, at least, for this present world, and among those whom fortune has shielded from its adversities, it is only by that righteousness which is propped on the basis of piety that the great mass of a nation's virtue can be upholden.

There is something in the history of these London executions that is truly dismal.\* It is like getting a glimpse into Pandæmonium; nor do we believe that, in the annals of human depravity, did ever stout-hearted sinners betray a more fierce and unfeeling hardihood. It is not that part of the exhibition which

\* Executions of men who had conspired for the murder of the Ministers of State.

is merely revolting to sensitive nature that we are now alluding to. It is not the struggle, and the death, and the shrouded operator, and the bloody heads that were carried round the scaffold, and the headless bodies of men who but one hour before lifted their proud defiance to the God in whose presence the whole decision of their spirits must by this time have melted away. It is the moral part of the exhibition that is so appalling. It is the firm desperado step with which they ascended to the place of execution. It is the undaunted scowl which they cast on the dread apparatus before them. It is the frenzied and bacchanalian levity with which they bore up their courage to the last, and earned, in return, the applause of thousands as fierce and as frenzied as themselves. It is the unquelled daring of the man who laughed, and who sung, and who cheered the multitude, ere he took his leap into eternity, and was cheered by the multitude rending the air with approbation back again. These are the doings of infidelity. These are the genuine exhibitions of the popular mind, after that Religion has abandoned it. It is neither a system of unchristian morals, nor the meagre Christianity of those who deride, as methodistical, all the peculiarities of our Faith, that will recall our neglected population. There is not one other expedient by which you will recover the olden character of England, but by going forth with the gospel of Jesus Christ among its people. Nothing will subdue them but that regenerating power which goes along with the faith of the New Testament. And nothing will charm away the alienation of their spirits, but their belief in the overtures of redeeming mercy.

But we may expatiate too long ; and let us therefore hasten to a close with a few brief and categorical announcements, which we shall simply leave with you as materials for your own consideration.

First. Though social virtue, and loyalty, which is one of its essential ingredients, may exist in the upper walks of life apart from godliness—yet godliness, in the hearts of those who have the brunt of all the common and popular temptations to stand against, is the main and effective hold that we have upon them for securing the righteousness of their lives.

Secondly. The despisers of godliness are the enemies of the true interest of our nation ; and it is possible that, under the name of Methodism, that very instrument may be put away which can alone recall the departing virtues of our land.

Thirdly. Where godliness exists, loyalty exists; and no plausible delusion—no fire of their own kindling, lighted at the torch of false or spurious patriotism, will ever eclipse the light of this plain authoritative Scripture—"Honour the king, and meddle not with those who are given to change."

But again. Such is the power of Christianity, that, even though partially introduced in the whole extent of its saving and converting influences, it may work a general effect on the civil and secular virtues of a given neighbourhood. It is thus that Christianity may only work the salvation of a few, while it raises the standard of morality among many. The reflex influence of one sacred character upon the vicinity of his residence may soften, and purify, and overawe many others, even where it does not spiritualize them. This is encouragement to begin with. It lets us perceive that, even before a great spiritual achievement has been finished, a kind of derived and moral influence may have widely and visibly spread among the population. It is thus that Christians are the salt of the earth; and we know not how few they are that may preserve society at large from falling into dissolution. It is because there are so very few among us, that our nation stands on the brink of so fearful an emergency. Were there fewer, our circumstances would be still more fearful; and if, instead of this, there were a few more, the national virtue may reattain all the lustre it ever had, even while a small fraction of our people are spiritual men. It is in this way, that we would defend those who so sanguinely count on the power of Christianity, from the imputation of being at all romantic in their hopes or undertakings. It may take ages ere their ultimate object, which is to generalize the spirit and character of the millennium in our world, be accomplished. But if there were just a tendency to go forth among our people on the errand of Christianizing them, and that tendency were not thwarted by the enmity and intolerance of those who revile and discourage and set at nought all the activities of religious zeal, we should not be surprised though in a few years a resurrection were witnessed amongst us of all the virtues that establish and that exalt a nation.

But lastly. Alarming as the aspect of the times is, and deeply tainted and imbued as the minds of many are with infidelity; and widely spread as the habit has become of alienation from all the ordinances of religion; and sullen as the contempt may be, wherewith the hardy blasphemer of Christianity would

hearken to its lessons, and eye its ministers, yet even he could not so withstand the honest and persevering good-will of one on whom there stood, visibly announced, the single-hearted benevolence of the gospel, as either to refuse him a tribute of kindness, when he met him on the street, or as to reject, with incivility and disdain, the advances he made upon his own family. Even though he should sternly refuse to lend himself to any of the processes of a moral and spiritual operator, yet it is a fact experimentally known, that he will not refuse to lend his children. The very man who, unpitied of himself, danced and sung on the borders of that abyss which was to engulf him in a lake of vengeance for ever, even he had about him a part of surviving tenderness, and he could positively weep when he thought of his family. He who, had he met a minister of state would have murdered him, had he met the Sabbath-school teacher who ventured across his threshold, and simply requested the attendance of his children, might have tried to bear a harsh and repulsive front against him, but would have found it to be impossible. Here is a feeling which even the irreligion of the times has not obliterated, and it has left, as it were, an open door of access, through which we might at length find our way to the landing-place of a purer and better generation. We hear much of the olden time, when each parent presided over the religion of his own family, and acted every Sabbath evening the patriarch of Christian wisdom among the inmates of his own dwelling-place. How is it that this beautiful picture is again to be realized? Is it by persuasives, however forcible, addressed to those who never listen to them? Is it by the well-told regrets of a mere indolent sentimentalism? Is it by lifting up a voice, that will die in distance away, long ere it reach that mighty population who lie so remote from all our churches, and from all our ordinances? Are we to be interdicted from bending the twig with a strength which we do have, because others require of us to bend the impracticable tree, with a strength which we do not have? The question is a practical one, and should be met experimentally;—how is the olden time to be brought back again? Is it by merely looking back upon it with an eye of tasteful contemplation; or is it by letting matters alone; or is it by breathing indignation and despite against all the efforts of religious philanthropy; or is it by disdainful obloquy against those who do something, on the part of those that do nothing? Who, in a future generation, will be the like-

liest parents for setting up the old system?—the children who now run neglected through the streets, or those who, snatched from Sabbath profanation, receive a weekly training among the decencies and the docilities of a religious school? It is not the experimental truth upon this question, that the amount of family religion is lessened under such an arrangement, in those houses where it had a previous existence; but that instead of this it is often established in houses where it was before unknown. It is true, that unless a Sabbath-school apparatus be animated by the Spirit of God, it will not bear with effect on the morals of the rising generation; but still it is by the frame-work of some apparatus or other that the Spirit works: and we deem that the likeliest and the best devised for the present circumstances of our country, which can secure, and that immediately, the most abundant strength of application on tender and susceptible childhood.\*

In conclusion, we may advert to a certain class of society, now happily on the decline, who are fearful of enlightening the poor; and would rather that everything was suffered to remain in the quiescence of its present condition; and though the Bible may be called the key to the kingdom of heaven, yet, associating, as they do, the turbulence of the people with the supposed ascent that they have made in the scale of information, would not care so to depress them beneath the level of their present scanty literature, as virtually to deny them the use and the possession of the Oracles of God. Such is the unfeeling policy of

\* Had not the sermon been extended to so great a length, its author might have entered a little more into detail on the operation and advantage of the Sabbath-school system; an omission, however, which he less regrets, as, in the work of supplying it, he would have done little more than repeated what he has published on the subject, in a more express form.

The same remark applies to the cursory allusion that he has made on that melancholy topic, the lack of city churches, and the unwieldy extent of city parishes; he having, elsewhere, both delivered the arithmetical statements upon this topic, and also ventured to suggest the gradual remedy that might be provided for the restoration of church-going habits among the people of our great towns.

He takes the opportunity which this note affords him, of referring the attention of his readers to a truly Christian charge, drawn up by the Methodist body in November 1819, on the subject of the political discontents which then agitated the country. It was circulated, he understands, among the members and ministers of that connexion, and ought for ever to dissolve the imagination of any alliance between the spirit of Methodism and the spirit of a factious or disaffected turbulence.

He would further observe, that the mighty influence of a Sabbath on the general moral and religious character of the people, may serve to vindicate the zeal of a former generation about this one observance—a zeal which is regarded by many as altogether misplaced and puritanical. Without entering into the question, whether the law of the country should interfere to shield this day from outward and visible profanation, it may at least be affirmed, that the opinion of those who rate the alternations of Christianity in a land, by the fluctuating regards which, from one age to another, are rendered to the Christian Sabbath, is deeply founded on the true philosophy of our nature.

those who would thus smother all the capabilities of humble life, and lay an interdict on the cultivation of human souls, and barter away the eternity of the lower orders, for the temporal safety and protection of the higher, and, in the false imagination that to sow knowledge is to sow sedition in the land, look suspiciously and hardly on any attempt thus to educate the inferior classes of society. It is well that these bugbears are rapidly losing their influence—and we know not how far this is due to our late venerable monarch, who, acting like a father for the good of his people, certainly did much to rebuke this cruel and unfeeling policy away from his empire. His saying, "That he hoped to see the time when there should not be a poor child in his dominions who was not taught to read the Bible," deserves to be enshrined among the best and the wisest of all the memorabilia of other days. It needs only the Saxon antiquity of Alfred, to give it a higher place than is given to all that is recorded even of his wisdom. We trust that it will be embodied in the remembrance of our nation, and be handed down as a most precious English tradition, for guiding the practice of English families; and that, viewed as the memorial of a Patriot King, it will supplant the old association that obtained between knowledge and rebellion, and raise a new association in its place, between the cause of education and the cause of loyalty. Be assured, that it is not because the people know too much, that they ever become the willing subjects of any factious or unprincipled demagogue—it is just because they know too little. It is just because ignorance is the field on which the quackery of a political impostor ever reaps its most abundant harvest. It is this which arms him with all his superiority; and the way eventually to protect society from the fermentation of such agitators, is to scatter throughout the mass as much of knowledge and information as will equalize the people to the men who bear them no other regard, than as the instruments of uproar and overthrow. No coercion can so keep down the cause of scholarship, as that there shall not be a sufficient number, both of educated and unprincipled men, to plot the disturbance and overthrow of all the order that exists in society. You cannot depress these to the level of popular ignorance, in a country where schools have not been universally instituted. You cannot unscholar demagogues down to the level of an untaught multitude; and the only remaining alternative is, to scholar the

multitude up to the level of demagogues. Let Scotland,\* even in spite of the exhibition that she has recently made, be compared with the other two great portions of our British territory, and it will be seen, historically as well as argumentatively, that the way to tranquillize a people is not to inthrall but to enlighten them. It is, in short, with general knowledge as it is with the knowledge of Christianity. There are incidental evils attendant on the progress of both; but a most glorious consummation will be the result of the perfecting of both. Let us go forth, without restraint, on the work of evangelizing the world, and the world, under such a process, will become the blissful abode of Christian and well-ordered families. And let us go forth, with equal alacrity, to the work of spreading education among our own people; and, instead of bringing on an anticipated chaos, will it serve to grace and to strengthen all the bulwarks of security in the midst of us. The growth of intelligence and of moral worth among the people, will at length stamp upon them all that majesty of which they will ever be ambitious; and, instead of a precarious tranquillity, resting upon the basis of an ignorance ever open to the influences of delusion, will the elements of peace, and truth, and righteousness, be seen to multiply along with the progress of learning in our land.

\* What we regret most in our late disturbances, is, that it may serve to foment the prejudice which still exists against the cause of popular education. It is worthy of remark, that of late years, both in Glasgow and Paisley, this cause has been most lamentably on the decline; insomuch that we will venture to say, there is no town population in Scotland which has become so closely assimilated, in this respect, to the manufacturing population of our sister country. Any danger which may be conceived to arise from education, proceeds not from the extent of it in any one class of society, but from the inequality of it between people either of the same or of different classes; thus rendering one part of the population more manageably subservient to any designing villany or artifice that may exist in another part. The clear and direct way of restoring this inequality, is, not to darken and degrade all, which is impracticable, but, as much as possible, to enlighten all.



SERMONS ON PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

10

## SERMON I.

(Preached before the Dundee Missionary Society, Oct. 26, 1812.)

THE TWO GREAT INSTRUMENTS APPOINTED FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL; AND THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN PUBLIC TO KEEP THEM BOTH IN VIGOROUS OPERATION.

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”—ROMANS x. 17.

IN the prosecution of the following discourse, I shall *first* lay before you, in a few words, the general lesson which the text furnishes; and, in the *second* place, I shall apply it to explain the objects of that Society whose claims to the generosity of the public I am appointed to advocate.

First. As all is suspended upon God, and as He reigns with as supreme a dominion in the heart of man as in the world around us, there is no doubt that every affection of this heart—the remorse which imbitters it, the terror which appals it, the faith which restores it, the love which inflames it—there can be no doubt, I say, that all is the work of God. However great the diversity of operations, it is He that worketh all in all; and the apostle Paul expressly ascribes the faith of a human soul to the operation of His hand, when he prays, in behalf of the Thessalonians, that God would fulfil in them all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power.

But, on the other hand, it is evident, that throughout the wide extent of nature and of providence, though it be God alone that worketh, yet He worketh by instruments; and that, without any wish to question or to impair His sovereignty, it is an established habit of language to ascribe that to the instrument, which is solely and exclusively due to the Omnipotent Himself. We say that it is rain which makes the grass to grow: it is God, in fact, who makes the grass to grow; and He does it by the instrumentality of rain. Yet we do not say that there is any impiety in this mode of expression; nor does it imply that we in thought transfer that to the instrument, which is due only to Him in

whose hand the instrument is. It is a mere habit of language, and the apostle himself has fallen into the use of it. None were more impressed than he with the pious sentiment that all depends upon God, and cometh from God; yet he does not overlook the instrumentality of a preacher, and tells the Romans, in the words of my text, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

If, in that extraordinary age, when the Author of nature broke in upon the constancy of its operations, and asserted by miracles His own mighty power to subdue and to control it—if, in such an age, one of His own inspired messengers does not overlook the use and agency of instruments, surely it would ill become us to overlook them. It is right that we should carry about with us, at all times and in all places, a sentiment of piety; but it must not be piety of our own forging—it must be the prescribed piety of revelation. We have no right to sit in indolence, and wait for the immediate agency of heaven, if God has told us that it is by the co-operation of human beings that the end is to be accomplished; and if He orders that co-operation, we are not merely to acquiesce in the sentiment that it is God who does the thing, but we must acquiesce in His manner of doing it; and if that be by instruments, nothing remains for us but submissively to concur and obediently to go along with it.

Now, let it be observed, that the operation of the two instruments laid before us in the text is somewhat different at present from what it was in the days of the apostles. Those were the days of inspiration; and the faith which was so widely diffused through the world in the first ages of Christianity, came by the hearing of inspired teachers. The two steps of the process were just what we find them described in the passage before us: Faith came by hearing—it came by the hearing of the apostles; and hearing came by the Word of God—for, in the great matters of salvation, the apostles spake only as God put the word into their mouth, and as the Spirit of God gave them utterance.

But whatever is capable of being spoken is capable of being written also; and it was not long before the teachers of Christianity committed to writing the doctrine of salvation. It went over the world, and it has come down to posterity, in the form of Gospels and Epistles. The collection of these documents is still called the Word of God: it is in fact that word come down to us by the instrumentality of written language. If you read it with the impression on your mind that it is the genuine pro-

duction of inspired men, you are in circumstances likely enough for receiving faith. Now, however, there is a change in one of the instruments: it makes all the difference betwixt the messenger delivering the message in person, and sending you the substance of it in a written communication. In each of the ways, faith may result, and faith has resulted from it: there have been many thousand examples of the efficacy of the latter process as well as of the former—in which case, we may say that faith came by reading, and reading by the Word of God.

We are not to suppose, however, when reading was substituted in the place of hearing, that hearing was entirely laid aside. It is true, that you can no longer hear the immediate messengers of Heaven; but you can hear the descendants of these messengers. You can no longer hear men who have the benefit of inspiration; but you can hear men, whose office it is to give their study to the written documents, which the inspiration of a former age has left behind it. We know that you have access to these documents yourselves; and may light and learning grow and multiply among you. We know, that upon the solitary reading of the word, Heaven often sends its most precious influences. But we know that Heaven also gives a salutary and a saving influence to the living energy of a human voice—that the man who speaketh from the heart speaketh to it—that the tones of earnestness, and sincerity, and feeling, carry an emphasis and an infection along with them—that there is an impression in the power of example—that there is an authority in superior learning—that there is a charm in fervent piety—that there is a usefulness in the wisdom which can apply Scripture to the varieties of individual experience—that there is a force and urgency in pathetic exhortation—that there is a constraining influence in the watchful anxiety of Him who entreats you to mind the things which belong to your peace. These are undoubted facts; and the minister who can combine all these in his own person, and bring them to bear upon the minds of his people, may, under the blessing of God, convert the hearing of the word into an instrument of mighty operation even in these latter days, and may exemplify my text upon many of those who are sitting and listening around him. Faith may be wrought in them with power; and when asked to explain the process by which they arrived at it, they may truly say, that their faith came by hearing, and their hearing by the word of God.

In no age of the church, indeed, does it appear that the one

instrument ever superseded the other; or that, upon the mere existence of the written word among the people, the hearing of that word was ever dispensed with as a superfluous exercise. When Ezra received the written law, there is no doubt that copies of it would spread and multiply in the country; yet this was not enough in the eye of that great Jewish reformer. He himself opened the book in the sight of the people, and they stood up. He had priests and Levites along with him; and we are told in Nehemiah, that they not only "read in the book of the law of God distinctly, but they gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading." And we have reason to believe, that this reading and expounding of the law was not acted upon on one solitary occasion, but that from the days of Ezra it formed a permanent institution among the Jews. We meet with traces of its existence in the New Testament. In the Acts of the Apostles we have some information respecting the service of the synagogue. When Paul and his companions came to Antioch in Pisidia, they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down; and after the reading of the law and the prophets—a circumstance introduced without any explanation, as if it had been a mere matter of course, and a customary exercise among them—after this reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, "Men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation unto the people, say on." But, in the Gospel by Luke, we have a piece of history still more decisive; when our Saviour Himself not only sanctions by His presence, but gives the high authority of His example, to the reading and exposition of the word. He stood up, and read a passage out of their Scriptures, and expounded the passage to them. It is not likely that there was any violation of the established order of the synagogue in this proceeding of our Saviour's. It was not His practice to fly in the face of any existing institution; and from this passage we collect not merely the high sanction of His example to the practice of reading and expounding, but we also collect that it was a practice in established operation among the Jews. And it has descended, without interruption, through all the successive ages of Christian worship. The inspired teachers of Christianity deemed it necessary to leave something more than the written volume of inspiration behind them. They left teachers and overseers; and to this very day, the readings, and the explanations, and the sermons of Christian pastors, are superadded to the silent and soli-

tary reading of Christian people; and both are found to be instruments of mighty operation, for the perfecting of the saints and for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Neither instrument is to be dispensed with. If you have hearing without reading, you lay the church open to all the corruptions of Popery. You have priests, but you have no Bibles. You have a minister, but you have no word of God to confront him. You take your lesson from the wisdom of man, and throw away from you all the light and benefit of revelation. The faith of the people lies at the mercy of every capricious element in the human character. It fluctuates with the taste and the understanding of the minister. The precious interest of your souls is committed to the passions and the prejudices of a fellow mortal—that interest for which God Himself has made so noble a provision—for which He sent His eternal Son into the world, and conferred miracles and revelations on His followers. By pinning your creed to your minister, you put the whole of this provision away from you; you change a heavenly instructor for an earthly; you turn from the offered guidance of the Almighty, and resign the keeping of your conscience to one who, in as far as he wanders from the word of God, is as blind and ignorant and helpless as yourself. No, my brethren! keep fast by your Bible. Try, if you can, to outstrip us in the wisdom of the word of Christ; and bring the salutary control of a zealous, and enlightened, and reading population, to bear upon the priesthood. Let not your faith come by hearing alone; but let your hearing be tried by the word of God. Let it not be said, that what you believe is what you have heard; and that what you have heard is what prejudice, or fancy, or habit, or unauthorized speculation, may have suggested to your minister. Let it be said that what you believe is what you have heard—not because what you have heard cometh from him, and is supported by his authority; but because you know it to be the doctrine of the Bible, and you are satisfied that he has acted the part of a faithful interpreter—not because you have tried the word by the hearing; but because you have tried the hearing by the word—not because you have brought revelation under the tribunal of your minister; but because you have brought your minister under the tribunal of revelation. In the mighty concern of your faith, we give you every encouragement to bring your own reading and your own discernment into action. Have the Bible, that high and ultimate standard of appeal, per-

petually in your eye. Cultivate a growing acquaintance with this standard. It will keep all right and steady, and save you from being agitated by the ever-varying winds of human doctrine and human speculation. Your faith will come by hearing, but your hearing by the word of God.

But, I again repeat it, neither instrument is to be dispensed with. If you have reading without hearing, you throw away the benefit of a public ministry—an institution sanctioned by the Bible, and transmitted to us through all the successive ages of the church, from the very time of the apostles. Let every man, if possible, be as enlightened as his minister; and let us make perpetual approaches to that state of things when “they shall teach no more every man his brother and every man his neighbour, saying, ‘Know the Lord;’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them even to the greatest.” It is our delight and our confidence that scriptural knowledge is every day extending among you; but we cannot shut our eyes to the obvious fact, that the degree of illumination foretold by the prophet is not yet arrived—that though the majority be thinning every year, yet the unenlightened are still the majority—that priests have still to do what they did in the days of Ezra; they have not merely to read in the book of the law distinctly, but they have to give the sense, and cause you to understand the reading—that though, after the era of universal light, some may think that the institution of a public ministry might be dispensed with; yet as the era has not yet arrived, but we are only on the road to it, the institution itself is one of the most powerful expedients for hastening its accomplishment. But what is more, I would not rashly give up the hearing of the word even after the light of perfect knowledge has dawned in all its brilliancy upon the world. “Wherefore, I will not be negligent,” says the apostle Peter, “to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.” Though you have no knowledge to receive, you have memories to be refreshed; minds which, however pure, need to be stirred up by way of remembrance. It is true, you have the Bible within your reach; but every man knows how different in point of certainty is the doing of a thing which may be done at any time, and the doing of a thing which habit and duty have accustomed you to repeat at stated intervals. You may not be disposed at all times to bring your minds into contact with your Bibles; but upon a simple and mechanical act of obedience to



the Sabbath-bell, a population is assembled, and a minister is in his place, whose office it is to bring the Bible into contact with your minds. I do not speak of his ministrations from house to house. I speak of his ministrations from the pulpit, whence it is often the high prerogative of a single man to make the word of God bear with energy and effect upon the consciences of hundreds. And he can do more than this; he can spread around him the infection of his own piety. He can kindle the fine ardours of sentiment and sincerity among his hearers. He can pour out all his tenderness and all his anxiety upon them. By the power and urgency of a living voice, he can touch the hearts of his people; and, with the blessing of God upon his endeavours, he can pull down the indolence, and the security, and the strongholds of corruption within them. The worth of the man can give a mighty energy to the words of the minister; and, what with the example of one, and the stirring eloquence of another, I hold an active, a pure, and a zealous ministry, spread over the face of the country, and labouring in its districts and parishes, to be one great palladium of Christianity in the land.

This brings me, in the second place, to the object of that Society whose claims upon the generosity of the public I am appointed to lay before you.

But pardon me, if I put a case to you, taken from ordinary life, for the sake of familiar and convincing illustration.

Let me suppose, that upon any one individual among you there has devolved the entire maintenance of a helpless orphan, and that you lie under a solemn obligation to acquit yourself to the full of this benevolent undertaking. You know that the term "maintenance" embraces in it many particulars; but, for the present, I shall confine my attention to two—the food to eat, and the raiment to put on. Both must be provided for the object of your charity; and for this purpose you must look forward to the payment of separate accounts; and the thing which you are bound to do cannot be accomplished without satisfying the demands of two or more tradesmen. You may feed the child—but withhold from it raiment, and you leave it to perish in the inclemency of the weather; you may clothe the child—but withhold from it food, and it dies in the agonies of hunger. You have done something, it is true; and that something was very essential: but you have also omitted something; and that something was equally essential, so much so, indeed, that by virtue of the omission the unhappy orphan has perished; and

upon you lie the guilt and the cruelty of having abandoned it. I speak in these strong terms, because I am supposing that the individual is both bound and able to accomplish the entire maintenance of the child. Yet, when called to account for the barbarity of his conduct, I can conceive an explanation by which he might attempt to palliate his negligence. "It is true, I was quite equal to the task; but then I was so teased by the number of separate accounts and separate applications! Had one tradesman undertaken to provide all the articles of maintenance, my patience would not have been exhausted: but I had not one, but several, to satisfy; and I fairly confess that I got tired and disgusted at the number of them." The answer to this is quite obvious. It is found, that if one man devotes an undivided attention to one kind of work, he carries it to far greater perfection than if his attention were distracted among several. It is this principle which has given rise to the division of employment in society. Each individual betakes himself to his own trade and his own manufacture. The accommodations of life are poured in far greater abundance upon the country; and each article is both better done, and furnished far more cheaply, than if one individual had undertaken to prepare every thing which enters into the maintenance of a human being.

When our Saviour left the earth, He left a task behind Him to His disciples—"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." A great part of the task has devolved upon us; for it is not yet accomplished. There are nations who never heard of the name of Jesus; and the cause of sending light and Christianity amongst them is left an orphan upon the world. There are thousands, even in this professing country, who would spurn at the orphan, and pour upon it the cruelty of their derision: but there are others who feel an emphasis in the last words of their Saviour, and have taken into their protection the cause which He has bequeathed to us. On the benevolence of a Christian public, the maintenance of that cause is devolved. It is their part not to leave it to perish amongst the garbled and unfinished operations of a cold, timid, and hesitating selfishness. The propagation of the gospel is the task which your Saviour has consigned to you. It is a cause, the maintenance of which, consists of various particulars; but I confine myself to two—you must put the mighty instruments of my text into operation; and you must keep them agoing till your object be accomplished. That object is the salvation of the heathen. There is only one name

given under heaven whereby men can be saved. There is only one way in which salvation can be brought about, and it is this—"The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." My text tells you that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Send Bibles among them: but there are many countries, where, without missionaries, a Bible is a sealed book, and a packet of Bibles a mere spectacle for savages to stare at. Without a human agent in the business, you keep back one of the instruments entirely—you keep back the hearing of the word; and what is more, without a human agent, you leave the other instrument unfinished—you may give the Bible, but you keep back the capacity of reading it. Both must be done; and if you withhold human agents, you starve and you stifle the cause which it is your duty to support and to stand by through all its necessities.

To make the case before us correspond in all its points to the imaginary one which I have already brought forward, the first question I have to answer is, Whether there be ability in the public to discharge the various claims which are made upon its benevolence? My reply is a very short one. Much has been already done in the way of turning men from darkness to the light and the knowledge of Christianity; and what we aim at is, that this rate of activity be not only kept up, but extended. Now, to estimate whether there be a fund in the country for future operations, let us calculate the actual expenses of the past. I do not confine myself to the expenses of the Missionary Society; I add to them the expenses of the Bible Society, and all the others which exist in the country for religious purposes: and I am fairly within limits, when I say that the joint expense of the whole does not exceed a hundred thousand pounds in the year.\* Before you stand appalled at the magnitude of the sum, divide it among the British population; and you will find, that what has been already done for the extension of gospel light among the nations of the world amounts to a penny a month for each householder, or twopence a year for each individual within the limits of the empire. This plain statement sets the question of ability at rest; and any objection on the score of extravagance in our demands upon the public will not bear a hearing.

The next question we have to answer is, Why are we teased then with so many separate applications? Could not one Society embrace all the various objects connected with religion; and

\* It is now considerably beyond this.

could not all the various demands be reduced to the simplicity of one yearly subscription?—One Society might embrace all the objects connected with religion; but, on the principle of the division of employment, separate Societies, each devoting itself to one of these objects, are productive of greater good: they do more business, upon cheaper terms. Instead of one Society, overpowered with the extent and embarrassed with the multiplicity of its concerns, we have many, each cultivating one department, and giving the labours of its committee to one assigned object. It is just another example of the separation of employments. The Societies of England have naturally formed themselves into that arrangement which they find to be most useful and efficient: and when I see one with its printing utensils, multiplying copies of the Word of God—another, with its Missionary College, training adventurous spirits for all the climes and countries of the world—another, with its Jewish Chapel, for fighting the battles of the faith with its oldest and most inveterate enemies—another, with its apparatus of schools and teachers, for carrying the Lancasterian method among the unlettered population of all countries—another, singling out Africa as the sole object of its exertions; and by the introduction of knowledge and the arts, contriving some reparation for the wrongs of that deeply-injured continent. In all these I see a refreshing spectacle, a warm spirit of religious benevolence animating them all; but each, by betaking itself to its own object, and assiduously culturing its own vineyard, rendering the work and the labour of love far more productive, than any single Society with the wealth of all at its command could possibly have accomplished.

The propagation of the gospel is a cause the maintenance of which consists of various particulars; but I restrict your attention to two—the providing of Bibles, and the providing of human agents. The former is the word of God, one of the instruments of my text. The latter, by teaching them to read, teaches unlettered people to use that instrument; and to the latter belongs the exclusive office of bringing the other instrument to bear upon them—the instrument of hearing. The Society whose office it is to provide the former instrument is well known by the name of the Bible Society. The Society whose office it is to provide the latter instrument is also well known by the name of the Missionary Society. It is the duty of a Christian public to keep both instruments in vigorous

operation. Each of these Societies has mighty claims upon you. I will not venture to pronounce a comparison between them ; but if the question were put to me, shall any part of the funds of the one Society be transferred to the other ? I would not hesitate to reply, *Not one farthing*. You are not to provide food for the orphan at the expense of its raiment ; nor are you to provide raiment for it at the expense of its food. You are to provide both, at the expense of those upon whom its maintenance has devolved. You are to interest the public in both objects. You are to state, and you state truly, that neither of them is yet sufficiently provided for—that every shilling of addition to the funds of either Society is an addition of good to the Christian cause—that, though as much has been done as to justify the most splendid anticipations, yet much more remains to be done in both departments, before these anticipations can be carried into effect. Each Society should send its advocates over the country ; and if one of them were at this moment sounding the merits of the Bible Society in another church and to another people, I would not view him as a rival, but hail him as a brother and as a friend ; and when told of the success of his efforts and the magnitude of his collection, I would bless God and rejoice along with him.

They are sister Societies. I have not time to detail the operations of either ; for these I refer you to their Reports, which are published every year, and are accessible to all of you. But to satisfy you I shall select a few particulars, from a source which you will deem pure and unexceptionable. I shall give the testimony of one Society to the usefulness of another ; and from the Reports of the Bible Society, I shall present you with arguments why, whatever extent and efficiency be given to the one, the other is not to be abandoned.

The very second in the list of donations by the Bible Society is “To the Mohawk nations, two thousand copies of the Gospel of St. John.” But who prepared the Indians of Upper Canada for such a present ?—they were Missionaries. There are Missionaries now labouring amongst them employed by our Society ; and had it not been for the previous exertions of human agents, this field of usefulness would have been withheld from the Bible Society altogether.

Another donation is “To India, to be applied to the translation of the Scriptures into the Oriental languages, one thousand pounds ;” and this has been swelled by farther donations to a

very princely sum. It is in aid of the noble undertaking of translating the Scriptures into the fifteen languages of India. But who set it agoing?—a Missionary Society.\* Who showed that it was practicable?—the human agents sent out by that Society. Who are accomplished for presiding over the different translations?—the same human agents, who have lived for years among the natives, and have braved resistance and death in the noble enterprise. Who formed a Christian population eager to receive these versions the moment they have issued from the press, and who have already absorbed whole editions of the New Testament?—the same answer—Missionaries. Our own Society can lay claim to part of this population: they have formed native schools, and have added to the number of native Christians.

The next two donations I offer to your attention are, first, "For circulation in the West India Islands and the Spanish Main, one hundred Bibles and nine hundred Testaments in various languages;" second, "To negro congregations of Christians in Antigua, &c., five hundred Bibles and one thousand Testaments." Why is there any usefulness in this donation?—because Missionaries have gone before it. Do these copies really circulate? Yes, they do, among the negroes whom those intrepid men have Christianized under the scowl of jealousy—whom they have taught to look up to the Saviour as their friend, and to heaven as their asylum—and who, for the home they have been so cruelly torn from, have held out rest to their oppressed but believing spirits in the mansions which Christ has gone to prepare for them.

The next example shall comprise several donations. "First, To the Hottentot Christians at Bavian's-kloof and Grune-kloof, in South Africa, so many Bibles and Testaments; second, To the Rev. Dr. Van der Kemp, at Bethelsdorp, South Africa, for the Christian Hottentots, &c., fifty Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles; third, To the Rev. Mr. Anderson, Orange River, South Africa, fifty Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles; fourth, To the Rev. Mr. Albrecht, in the Namacqua country, South Africa, fifty Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles; fifth, To the Rev. Mr. Kicherer, Graaf Reinet, South Africa, one hundred Dutch Testaments and twelve Dutch Bibles." Now, what names and what countries are these?—They are the very countries which the Missionary Society is now cultivating, and the names of the very labourers sent out and maintained by them.

\* The translators in India were sent out by the Baptist Society.

The Bibles and Testaments are sent out in behalf of the many hundreds whom our Society had previously reclaimed from heathenism. The one Society is enabled to scatter the good seed in such profusion, because the other Society had prepared the ground for receiving it. Nor are the labours of these illustrious men confined to the business of Christianizing. They are at this moment giving the arts, and industry, and civilisation, to the natives—they are raising a beautiful spectacle to the moral eye amid the wilderness around them—they are giving piety, and virtue, and intelligence, to the prowling savages of Africa; and extending among the wildest of Nature's children the comforts and the decencies of humanized life. Oh, ye orators and philosophers who make the civilisation of the species your dream! look to Christian Missionaries, if you want to see the men who will realize it: You may deck the theme with the praises of your unsubstantial eloquence; but these are the men who are to accomplish the business! They are now risking every earthly comfort of existence in the cause; while you sit in silken security, and pour upon their holy undertaking the cruelty of your scorn.

But I must draw to a close; and shall only offer one donation more to your notice, as an evidence of the close alliance in point of effect betwixt the Bible and Missionary Societies—those two great fellow-labourers in the vineyard of Christian benevolence. "For the Esquimaux Indians, one thousand copies of St. Matthew's Gospel, in their vernacular tongues." Who gave these Indians a written language? Who translated a Gospel into their vernacular tongue? By what unaccountable process has it been brought about, that we now meet with readers and Christians among these furred barbarians of the North?—The answer is the same, All done by the exertions of Missionaries: and had it not been for them, the Bible Society would no more have thought at present of a translation into the language of Labrador, than they would have thought of a translation into any of the languages of unexplored Africa.

The two Societies go hand in hand. The one ploughs while the other sows: and let no opposition be instituted betwixt their claims on the generosity of the public. Let the advocates of each strain to the uttermost. The statement I have already given proves that there is a vast quantity of unbroken ground in the country for subscriptions to both; and how, by the accumulation of littles which no individual will ever feel or regret, a vast sum is still in reserve for the operations of these Christian

philanthropists. They are at this moment shedding a glory over the land, far beyond what the tumults or the triumphs of victory can bestow. Their deeds are peaceful, but they are illustrious; and they are accomplishing a grander and a more decisive step in the history of the species, than even he who, in the mighty career of a sweeping and successful ambition, has scattered its old establishments into nothing. I have only to look forward a few years, and I see *him* in his sepulchre; and a few years more, and all the dynasties he has formed give way to some new change in the vain and restless politics of the world. But the men with whom I contrast him have a more unperishable object in contemplation: I see the sublime character of eternity stamped upon their proceedings! The frailties of earthly politics do not attach to them; for they are the instruments of God—they are carrying on the high administration of Heaven—they are hastening the fulfilment of prophecies uttered in a far distant antiquity. “Many are going to and fro, and knowledge is increased.”—“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater—so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

I stand here as the advocate for the Missionary Society—for the men who are now going to and fro and increasing knowledge, and are preparing ground in so many different quarters of the world for the good seed of the word of God. I have already urged upon you the plea of their usefulness: I have now to urge upon you the plea of their necessities. They have exerted themselves not only according to their power, but beyond their power. They are in debt to their treasurer. Their embarrassments are their glory; and it is your part to save them from these embarrassments, lest they should become your disgrace. It is not for me to sit in judgment upon the circumstances of any individual amongst you. Are you poor?—I ask you to give no more than you can spare; nor will I keep back from you what the Bible says, “That he who provideth not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse



than an infidel." But the same Bible gives examples of the exercise of charity and alms-giving among the poor: The widow who threw her mite into the treasury was very poor: The members of the church in Corinth were in general poor—at least we are told that there were not many mighty, and not many noble, not many rich, among them—and yet this does not restrain the apostle from soliciting, nor does it restrain them from contributing to the necessities of the poor saints which were in Jerusalem. Throw the little you can spare into the treasury of Christian beneficence. It may be small; but if you give with cheerfulness, it will be counted more than many splendid donations. And as we are among scriptural examples and scriptural authorities, let us offer to your notice another advice of the apostle:—"Once a week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." This brings down the practice of charity to the level of the poor and labouring classes of society. Let me suppose that God enables you to lay by a single penny a week to the cause I am pleading for—a small offering, you will allow; but mark the power and the productiveness of littles. If each householder of this town were to come forward with his penny a week, it would raise for the Missionary Society upwards of a thousand pounds a year. I know that in point of fact they will not all come forward—that a few are really not able, and that more are not willing. Let me suppose, then, the trumpet sounded, by which all the destitute, all the faint-hearted, all the mockers at piety, are warned away from the cause; and that the number is reduced to one out of ten: There is nothing very sanguine, surely, in the calculation that one-tenth would stand by this glorious cause—a small proportion, no doubt; but if carried in the same proportion over the face of the country, it would produce for our Society an annual sixty thousand pounds—a sum exceeding by six times any yearly income which they have yet realized. I wish to exalt the poor to the consequence which belongs to them. There is a weight and an influence in numbers; and they have it. The individual offering may be small, but the produce of these weekly associations would give a mighty energy to the benevolent enterprises that are now afloat in the country. You have it in your power to form such an association; you can hold forth the example of a vigorous and well-conducted system; you can lead the way; you can spread abroad the statement of your success. Be assured that others would soon follow and the combined efforts of our poor men and

our labourers would do more for the cause of the gospel, than all the splendid offerings which the rich have yet thrown into the treasury.

Let me now turn to the rich, and entreat from them a liberality and an aid worthy of the situation in which Providence has placed them. They have already signalized themselves; and one of the most animating signs of our day is the opening and extending sympathy of the great for the spiritual necessities of their brethren. I call upon them to open their hearts, and pour out the flood of their benevolence on this purest and worthiest of causes—a cause on which the civilisation of the globe and the eternity of millions are suspended. I hope better things of you, my wealthier hearers, than that you will do anything but spurn at the paltry calculations which prey upon the fancies of the unfeeling and the sordid. “I give so much already!—I am so beset with applications!—I give to the Bible Society; I give to the charitable institutions of the town; I give to the vagrant who stands at my door; I give to the subscription-paper that is unfolded in my parlour; I am assailed with beggary in all its forms; and, from the clamorous beggary of the streets to the no less clamorous beggary of the pulpit, there is an extorting process going on, which, I have reason to fear, will in the end impoverish and exhaust me!” Pardon me, my brethren; I am in possession of no ground whatever for imputing this pathetic lamentation to you; nor do I know that I am now personifying a single individual amongst you. I am merely bringing forward a specimen of that kind of eloquence which is sometimes uttered upon an occasion like the present; and I do it for the purpose of bringing forward the effectual refutation of which it admits. We do not ask any to impoverish or exhaust themselves. We assail the rich with no more urgency than the poor; for we say to both alike—Give only what you can spare. We hold the question of alms-giving to depend not on what has been already given, but on what superfluity of wealth you are still in possession of. We know that to this question very different answers will be given, according to the principles and views and temper of the individual to whom it is applied; nor are we eager to pursue the question into all its applications. We do not want the offerings of an extorted charity; we barely state the merits of the case, and leave the impression with your own hearts, my friends and fellow-Christians. But when I take a view of society, and see the profusion and the splendour that surround me—when I see magnificence in every room that I enter, and luxury on

every table that is set before me—when I see the many thousand articles where retrenchment is possible, and any one of which would purchase for its owner the credit of unexampled liberality—when I see the sons and the daughters of fortune swimming down the full tide of enjoyment; and am told, that out of all this extravagance there is not a fragment to spare for sending the light of Christianity into the negro's hut, or pouring it abroad over the wide and dreary wilderness of Paganism—Surely, surely, you will agree with me in thinking, that we have now sunk down into the age of frivolity and of little men. Think of this, my brethren—that upon what a single individual has withheld out of that which he ought to have given, the sublime march of a human soul from time to eternity may have been arrested! Seize upon this conception in all its magnitude; and tell me, if, when put by the side of the sordid plea and the proud or angry refusal, all the gaieties of wealth and all its painted insignificance do not wither into nothing.

But I *must* come to a conclusion. There are hearts which will resist every power of urgency that is brought to bear upon them; but there are others which do not require it—those hearts which feel the influence of the gospel, and have the experience of its comforts. Those to whom Christ is precious, will long that others should taste of that preciousness. Those who have buried all their anxieties and all their terrors in the sufficiency of the atonement, will long that the knowledge of a remedy so effectual should be carried round the globe, and put within the reach of the myriads who live in guilt and who die in darkness. Those who know that the only refuge of man is under the covering of the one Mediatorship, will long to stretch forth the curtains of so secure a habitation—to lengthen the cords and to strengthen the stakes—to break forth on the right hand and on the left, and to extend a covering so ample over the sinners of all latitudes and of all countries. In a word, those who love the honour of the Saviour, will long that His kingdom be extended till all the nations of the earth be brought under His one grand and universal monarchy—till the powers of darkness shall be extinguished—till the mighty Spirit which Christ purchased by His obedience shall subdue every heart, shall root out the existence of sin, shall restore the degeneracy of our fallen nature, shall put an end to the restless variations of human folly and human injustice, and shall establish one wide empire of righteousness over a virtuous and a happy world.

## SERMON II.

*(Preached before the Edinburgh Society for Relief of the Destitute Sick, April 13, 1813.)*

## THE BLESSEDNESS OF CONSIDERING THE CASE OF THE POOR.

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.”—  
PSALM xli. 1.

THERE is an evident want of congeniality between the wisdom of this world and the wisdom of the Christian. The term “wisdom” carries my reverence along with it. It brings before me a grave and respectable character, whose rationality predominates over the inferior principles of his constitution; and to whom I willingly yield that peculiar homage which the enlightened, and the judicious, and the manly, are sure to exact from a surrounding neighbourhood. Now, so long as this wisdom has for its object some secular advantage, I yield it an unqualified reverence. It is a reverence which all understand, and all sympathize with. If in private life a man be wise in the management of his farm, or his fortune, or his family; or if in public life he have wisdom to steer an empire through all its difficulties, and to carry it to aggrandisement and renown—the respect which I feel for such wisdom as this is most cordial and entire, and supported by the universal acknowledgment of all whom I call to attend to it.

Let me now suppose that this wisdom has changed its object—that the man whom I am representing to exemplify this respectable attribute, instead of being wise for time, is wise for eternity—that he labours by the faith and sanctification of the gospel for unperishable honours—that, instead of listening to him with admiration at his sagacity, as he talks of business, or politics, or agriculture, we are compelled to listen to him talking of the hope within the veil, and of Christ being the power of God, and the wisdom of God, unto salvation—what becomes of your respect for him now? Are there not some of you who are quite sensible that this respect is greatly impaired, since the wisdom of the man has taken so unaccountable a change in its object and

in its direction? The truth is, that the greater part of the world feel no respect at all for a wisdom which they do not comprehend. They may love the innocence of a decidedly religious character, but they feel no sublime or commanding sentiment of veneration for its wisdom. All the truth of the Bible and all the grandeur of eternity will not redeem it from a certain degree of contempt. Terms which lower, undervalue, and degrade, suggest themselves to the mind, and strongly dispose it to throw a mean and disagreeable colouring over the man who, sitting loose to the objects of the world, has become altogether a Christian. It is needless to expatiate; but what I have seen myself, and what must have fallen under the observation of many whom I address, carry in them the testimony of experience to the assertion of the apostle, "that the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."

Now, what I have said of the respectable attribute of wisdom, is applicable, with almost no variation, to another attribute of the human character, to which I would assign the gentler epithet of "lovely." The attribute to which I allude is that of benevolence. This is the burden of every poet's song, and every eloquent and interesting enthusiast gives it his testimony. I speak not of the enthusiasm of methodists and devotees, I speak of that enthusiasm of fine sentiment which embellishes the pages of elegant literature, and is addressed to all her sighing and amiable votaries, in the various forms of novel, and poetry, and dramatic entertainment. You would think if anything could bring the Christian at one with the world around him, it would be this; and that, in the ardent benevolence which figures in novels and sparkles in poetry, there would be an entire congeniality with the benevolence of the gospel. I venture to say, however, that there never existed a stronger repulsion between two contending sentiments, than between the benevolence of the Christian and the benevolence which is the theme of elegant literature—that the one, with all its accompaniments of tears, and sensibilities, and interesting cottages, is neither felt nor understood by the Christian as such; and the other, with its work and its labour of love, its *enduring hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, and its living, not to itself, but to the will of Him who died for us, and who rose again, is not only not understood, but positively nauseated, by the poetical *amateur*.

But the contrast does not stop here. The benevolence of the

gospel is not only at antipodes with that of the visionary sons and daughters of poetry, but it even varies in some of its most distinguishing features from the experimental benevolence of real and familiar life. The fantastic benevolence of poetry is now indeed pretty well exploded; and in the more popular works of the age there is a benevolence of a far truer and more substantial kind substituted in its place—the benevolence which you meet with among men of business and observation—the benevolence which bustles and finds employment among the most public and ordinary scenes; and which seeks for objects, not where the flower blows loveliest, and the stream, with its gentle murmurs, falls sweetest on the ear; but finds them in its every-day walks, goes in quest of them through the heart of the great city, and is not afraid to meet them in its most putrid lanes and loathsome receptacles.

Now, it must be acknowledged that this benevolence is of a far more respectable kind than that poetic sensibility, which is of no use because it admits of no application. Yet I am not afraid to say, that, respectable as it is, it does not come up to the benevolence of the Christian; and is at variance, in some of its most capital ingredients, with the morality of the gospel. It is well, and very well, as far as it goes; and that Christian is wanting to the will of his Master, who refuses to share and go along with it. The Christian will do all this, but he would like to do more; and it is at the precise point where he proposes to do more, that he finds himself abandoned by the co-operation and good wishes of those who had hitherto supported him. The Christian goes as far as the votary of this useful benevolence; but then he would like to go further, and this is the point at which he is mortified to find that his old coadjutors refuse to go along with him; and that, instead of being strengthened by their assistance, he has their contempt and their ridicule, or at all events, their total want of sympathy to contend with. The truth is, that the benevolence I allude to, with all its respectable air of business and good sense, is altogether a secular benevolence. Through all the extent of its operations, it carries in it no reference to the eternal duration of its object. Time, and the accommodations of time, form all its subject, and all its exercise. It labours, and often with success, to provide for its object a warm and a well-sheltered tenement; but it looks not beyond the few little years when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, when the soul shall be driven from its perishable tene-

ment, and the only benevolence it will acknowledge or care for, will be the benevolence of those who have directed it to a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This, then, is the point at which the benevolence of the gospel separates from that worldly benevolence, to which, as far as it goes, I offer my cheerful and unmingled testimony. The one minds earthly things, the other has its conversation in heaven. Even when the immediate object of both is the same, you will generally perceive an evident distinction in the principle. Individuals, for example, may co-operate, and will often meet in the same room, be members of the same society, and go hand in hand most cordially together for the education of the poor. But the forming habits of virtuous industry, and good members of society, which are the sole consideration in the heart of the worldly philanthropist, are but mere accessaries in the heart of the Christian. The main impulse of his benevolence lies in furnishing the poor with the means of enjoying that bread of life which came down from heaven, and in introducing them to the knowledge of those Scriptures which are the power of God unto salvation to every one who believeth. Now, it is so far a blessing to the world, that there is a co-operation in the immediate object. But what I contend for is, that there is a total want of congeniality in the principle; that the moment you strip the institution of its temporal advantages, and make it repose on the naked grandeur of eternity, it is fallen from, or laughed at as one of the chimeras of fanaticism; and left to the despised efforts of those whom they esteem to be unaccountable people, who subscribe for missions, and squander their money on Bible Societies. Strange effect, you would think, of eternity—to degrade the object with which it is connected! But so it is. The blaze of glory which is thrown around the martyrdom of a patriot or a philosopher is refused to the martyrdom of a Christian. When a statesman dies who lifted his intrepid voice for the liberty of the species, we hear of nothing but of the shrines and the monuments of immortality. Put into his place one of those sturdy reformers, who, unmoved by councils and inquisitions, stood up for the religious liberties of the world; and it is no sooner done than the full tide of congenial sympathy and admiration is at once arrested. We have all heard of the benevolent apostleship of Howard, and what Christian will be behind his fellows with his applauding testimony? But will they, on the other hand, share his enthusiasm, when he tells them of the apostleship of Paul, who, in the sublimer sense

of the term, accomplished the liberty of the captive, and brought them that sat in darkness out of the prison-house? Will they share in the holy benevolence of the apostle, when he pours out his ardent effusions in behalf of his countrymen? They were at that time on the eve of the cruellest sufferings. The whole vengeance of the Roman power was mustering to bear upon them. The siege and destruction of their city form one of the most dreadful tragedies in the history of war. Yet Paul seems to have had another object in his eye. It was their souls and their eternity which engrossed him. Can you sympathize with him in this principle; or join in kindred benevolence with him, when he says that "my heart's desire and prayer for Israel is, that they might be saved"?

But, to bring my list of examples to a close, the most remarkable of them all may be collected from the history of the present attempts which are now making to carry the knowledge of Divine revelation into the pagan and uncivilized countries of the world. Now, it may be my ignorance, but I am certainly not aware of the fact—that without a book of religious faith; without religion, in fact, being the errand and occasion, we have ever been able in modern times so far to compel the attention and to subdue the habits of savages, as to throw in among them the use and the possession of a written language. Certain it is, however, at all events, that this very greatest step in the process of converting a wild man of the woods into a humanized member of society, has been accomplished by Christian missionaries. They have put into the hands of barbarians this mighty instrument of a written language, and they have taught them how to use it.\* They have formed an orthography for wandering and untutored savages. They have given a shape and a name to their barbarous articulations; and the children of men, who lived on the prey of the wilderness, are now forming in village schools to the arts and the decencies of cultivated life. Now, I am not involving you in the controversy, whether civilisation should precede Christianity, or Christianity should precede civilisation. It is not to what has been said on the subject, but to what has been done, that we are pointing your attention. We appeal to the

\* As, for instance, Mr. John Elliot, and the Moravian Brethren among the Indians of New England and Pennsylvania; the Moravians in South America; Mr. Hans Egede, and the Moravians in Greenland; the latter in Labrador, among the Esquimaux; the Missionaries in Otaheite, and other South Sea islands; and Mr. Brunton, under the patronage of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East, who reduced the language of the Susoos, a nation on the coast of Africa, to writing and grammatical form, and printed in it a spelling-book, vocabulary, catechism, and some tracts. Other instances besides might be given.



fact; and as an illustration of the principle we have been attempting to lay before you, we call upon you to mark the feelings, and the countenance, and the language, of the mere academic moralist, when you put into his hand the authentic and proper document where the fact is recorded—we mean a missionary report, or a missionary magazine. We know that there are men who have so much of the firm nerve and hardihood of philosophy about them, as not to be repelled from truth in whatever shape, or from whatever quarter, it comes to them. But there are others of a humbler cast, who have transferred their homage from the omnipotence of truth to the omnipotence of a name; who, because missionaries, while they are accomplishing the civilisation, are labouring also for the eternity of savages, have lifted the cry of fanaticism against them; who, because missionaries revere the word of God, and utter themselves in the language of the New Testament, nauseate every word that comes from them as overrun with the flavour and phraseology of methodism; who are determined, in short, to abominate all that is missionary, and suffer the very sound of the epithet to fill their minds with an overwhelming association of repugnance, and prejudice, and disgust.

We would not have counted this so remarkable an example, had it not been that missionaries are accomplishing the very object on which the advocates for civilisation love to expatiate. They are working for temporal good far more effectually than any adventurer in the cause ever did before; but mark the want of congeniality between the benevolence of this world and the benevolence of the Christian; they incur contempt, because they are working for spiritual and eternal good also: Nor do the earthly blessings which they scatter so abundantly in their way, redeem from scorn the purer and the nobler principle which inspires them.

These observations seem to be an applicable introduction to the subject before us. I call your attention to the *way* in which the Bible enjoins us to take up the care of the poor. It does not say, in the text before us, Commiserate the poor; for, if it said no more than this, it would leave their necessities to be provided for by the random ebullitions of an impetuous and unreflecting sympathy. It provides them with a better security than the mere feeling of compassion—a feeling which, however useful for the purpose of excitement, must be controlled and regulated. Feeling is but a faint and fluctuating security. Fancy

may mislead it. The sober realities of life may disgust it. Disappointment may extinguish it. Ingratitude may imbitter it. Deceit, with its counterfeit representations, may allure it to the wrong object. At all events, Time is the little circle within which it in general expatiates. It needs the impression of sensible objects to sustain it; nor can it enter with zeal or with vivacity into the wants of the abstract and invisible soul. The Bible, then, instead of leaving the relief of the poor to the mere instinct of sympathy, makes it a subject for *consideration*—Blessed is he that *considereth* the poor—a grave and prosaic exercise I do allow, and which makes no figure in those high-wrought descriptions, where the exquisite tale of benevolence is made up of all the sensibilities of tenderness on the one hand, and of all the ecstasies of gratitude on the other. The Bible rescues the cause from the mischief to which a heedless or unthinking sensibility would expose it. It brings it under the cognisance of a higher faculty—a faculty of steadier operation than to be weary in well-doing, and of sturdier endurance than to give it up in disgust. It calls you to *consider* the poor. It makes the virtue of relieving them a matter of computation as well as of sentiment; and, in so doing, it puts you beyond the reach of the various delusions, by which you are at one time led to prefer the indulgence of pity to the substantial interest of its object; at another, are led to retire chagrined and disappointed from the scene of duty, because you have not met with the gratitude or the honesty that you laid your account with; at another, are led to expend all your anxieties upon the accommodation of time, and to overlook eternity. It is the office of *consideration* to save you from all these fallacies. Under its tutorage, attention to the wants of the poor ripens into principle. I want to press its advantages upon you, for I can in no other way recommend the Society whose claims I am appointed to lay before you, so effectually to your patronage. My time will only permit me to lay before you a few of their advantages, and I shall therefore confine myself to two leading particulars.

I.—The man who considers the poor, instead of slumbering over the emotions of a useless sensibility, among those imaginary beings whom poetry and romance have laid before him in all the elegance of fictitious history, will bestow the labour and the attention of actual business among the poor of the real and the living world. Benevolence is the burden of every romantic tale,

and of every poet's song. It is dressed out in all the fairy enchantments of imagery and eloquence. All is beauty to the eye and music to the ear. Nothing seen but pictures of felicity, and nothing heard but the soft whispers of gratitude and affection. The reader is carried along by this soft and delighted representation of virtue. He accompanies his hero through all the fancied varieties of his history. He goes along with him to the cottage of poverty and disease, surrounded, as we may suppose, with all the charms of rural obscurity, and where the murmurs of an adjoining rivulet accord with the finer and more benevolent sensibilities of the mind. He enters this enchanting retirement, and meets with a picture of distress, adorned in all the elegance of fiction. Perhaps a father laid on a bed of languishing, and supported by the labours of a pious and affectionate family, where kindness breathes in every word, and anxiety sits upon every countenance—where the industry of his children struggles in vain to supply the cordials which his poverty denies him—where nature sinks every hour, and all feel a gloomy foreboding, which they strive to conceal, and tremble to express. The hero of romance enters, and the glance of his benevolent eye enlightens this darkest recess of misery. He turns him to the bed of languishing, tells the sick man that there is still hope, and smiles comfort on his despairing children. Day after day he repeats his kindness and his charity. They hail his approach as the footsteps of an angel of mercy. The father lives to bless his deliverer. The family reward his benevolence by the homage of an affectionate gratitude; and, in the piety of their evening prayer, offer up thanks to the God of heaven, for opening the hearts of the rich to kindly and beneficent attentions. The reader weeps with delight. The visions of paradise play before his fancy. His tears flow, and his heart dissolves in all the luxury of tenderness.

Now, we do not deny that the members of the Destitute Sick Society *may* at times have met with some such delightful scene, to soothe and to encourage them. But put the question to any of their visitors, and he will not fail to tell you, that if they had never moved but when they had something like this to excite and to gratify their hearts, they would seldom have moved at all; and their usefulness to the poor would have been reduced to a very humble fraction of what they have actually done for them. What is this but to say, that it is the business of a religious instructor to give you, not the elegant, but the true representation

of benevolence—to represent it not so much as a luxurious indulgence to the finer sensibilities of the mind, but according to the sober declaration of Scripture, as a work and as a labour—as a business in which you must encounter vexation, opposition, and fatigue; where you are not always to meet with that elegance which allures the fancy, or with that humble and retired adversity, which interests the more tender propensities of the heart; but as a business where reluctance must often be overcome by a sense of duty, and where, though oppressed at every step, by envy, disgust, and disappointment, you are bound to persevere, in obedience to the law of God, and the sober instigations of principle.

The benevolence of the gospel lies in action: the benevolence of our fictitious writers, in a kind of high-wrought delicacy of feeling and sentiment. The one dissipates all its fervour in sighs, and tears, and idle aspirations—the other reserves its strength for efforts and execution. The one regards it as a luxurious enjoyment for the heart—the other, as a work and a business for the hand. The one sits in indolence, and broods, in visionary rapture, over its schemes of ideal philanthropy—the other steps abroad, and enlightens by its presence, the dark and pestilential hovels of disease. The one wastes away in empty ejaculation—the other gives time and trouble to the work of beneficence—gives education to the orphan—provides clothes for the naked, and lays food on the tables of the hungry. The one is indolent and capricious, and often does mischief by the occasional overflowings of a whimsical and ill-directed charity—the other is vigilant and discerning, and takes care lest its distributions be injudicious, and the efforts of benevolence be misapplied. The one is soothed with the luxury of feeling, and reclines in easy and indolent satisfaction—the other shakes off the deceitful languor of contemplation and solitude, and delights in a scene of activity. Remember that virtue, in general, is not to feel, but to do—not merely to conceive a purpose, but to carry that purpose into execution—not merely to be overpowered by the impression of a sentiment, but to practise what it loves, and to imitate what it admires.

To be benevolent in speculation, is often to be selfish in action and in reality. The vanity and the indolence of man delude him into a thousand inconsistencies. He professes to love the name and the semblance of virtue; but the labour of exertion and of self-denial terrifies him from attempting it. The emo-

tions of kindness are delightful to his bosom, but then they are little better than a selfish indulgence. They terminate in his own enjoyment. They are a mere refinement of luxury. His eye melts over the picture of fictitious distress, while not a tear is left for the actual starvation and misery by which he is surrounded. It is easy to indulge the imaginations of a visionary heart in going over a scene of fancied affliction, because here there is no sloth to overcome—no avaricious propensity to control—no offensive or disgusting circumstance to allay the unmingled impression of sympathy which a soft and elegant picture is calculated to awaken. It is not so easy to be benevolent in action and in reality, because here there is fatigue to undergo—there is time and money to give—there is the mortifying spectacle of vice, and folly, and ingratitude to encounter. We like to give you the fair picture of love to man; because to throw over it false and fictitious embellishments, is injurious to its cause. They elevate the fancy by romantic visions which can never be realized. They imbitter the heart by the most severe and mortifying disappointments, and often force us to retire in disgust from what Heaven has intended to be the theatre of our discipline and preparation. Take the representation of the Bible. Benevolence is a work and a labour. It often calls for the severest efforts of vigilance and industry—a habit of action not to be acquired in the schools of fine sentiment, but in the walks of business; in the dark and dismal receptacles of misery; in the hospitals of disease; in the putrid lanes of our great cities, where poverty dwells in lank and ragged wretchedness, agonized with pain, faint with hunger, and shivering in a frail and unsheltered tenement.

You are not to conceive yourself a real lover of your species, and entitled to the praise or the reward of benevolence, because you weep over a fictitious representation of human misery. A man may weep in the indolence of a studious and contemplative retirement; he may breathe all the tender aspirations of humanity; but what avails all this warm and effusive benevolence, if it is never exerted—if it never rise to execution—if it never carry him to the accomplishment of a single benevolent purpose—if it shrink from activity, and sicken at the pain of fatigue? It is easy, indeed, to come forward with the cant and hypocrisy of fine sentiment—to have a heart trained to the emotions of benevolence, while the hand refuses the labour of discharging its offices—to weep for amusement, and have nothing to spare

for human suffering, but the tribute of an indolent and unmeaning sympathy. Many of you must be acquainted with that corruption of Christian doctrine which has been termed Antinomianism. It professes the highest reverence for the Supreme Being; while it refuses obedience to the lessons of His authority. It professes the highest gratitude for the sufferings of Christ; while it refuses that course of life and action which He demands of His followers. It professes to adore the tremendous Majesty of heaven, and to weep in shame and in sorrow over the sinfulness of degraded humanity; while every day it insults heaven by the enormity of its misdeeds, and evinces the insincerity of its repentance by its wilful perseverance in the practice of iniquity. This Antinomianism is generally condemned; and none reprobate it more than the votaries of fine sentiment—your men of taste and elegant literature—your epicures of feeling, who riot in all the luxury of theatrical emotion; and who, in their admiration of what is tender and beautiful and cultivated, have always turned with disgust from the doctrines of a sour and illiberal theology. We may say to such, as Nathan to David,

“Thou art the man.” Theirs is, to all intents and purposes, Antinomianism—and an Antinomianism of a far more dangerous and deceitful kind than the Antinomianism of a spurious and pretended orthodoxy. In the Antinomianism of religion, there is nothing to fascinate or deceive you. It wears an air of repulsive bigotry, more fitted to awaken disgust than to gain the admiration of proselytes. There is a glaring deformity in its aspect, which alarms you at the very outset, and is an outrage to that natural morality, which, dark and corrupted as it is, is still strong enough to lift its loud remonstrances against it. But in the Antinomianism of high-wrought sentiment, there is a deception far more insinuating. It steals upon you under the semblance of virtue. It is supported by the delusive colouring of imagination and poetry. It has all the graces and embellishments of literature to recommend it. Vanity is soothed, and conscience lulls itself to repose in this dream of feeling and of indolence.

Let us dismiss these lying vanities, and regulate our lives by the truth and soberness of the New Testament. Benevolence is not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth. It is a business with men as they are, and with human life as drawn by the rough hand of experience. It is a duty which you must perform at the call of principle; though there be no voice of

eloquence to give splendour to your exertions, and no music of poetry to lead your willing footsteps through the bowers of enchantment. It is not the impulse of high and ecstatic emotion. It is an exertion of principle. You must go to the poor man's cottage, though no verdure flourish around it, and no rivulet be nigh to delight you by the gentleness of its murmurs. If you look for the romantic simplicity of fiction, you will be disappointed; but it is your duty to persevere in spite of every discouragement. Benevolence is not merely a feeling, but a principle—not a dream of rapture for the fancy to indulge in, but a business for the hand to execute.

It must now be obvious to all of you, that it is not enough that you give money, and add your name to the contributions of charity. You must give it with judgment. You must give your time and your attention. You must descend to the trouble of examination. You must rise from the repose of contemplation, and make yourself acquainted with the object of your benevolent exercises. Will he squander your charity with care, or will he squander it away in idleness and dissipation? Will he satisfy himself with the brutal luxury of the moment, and neglect the supply of his more substantial necessities, or suffer his children to be trained in ignorance and depravity? Will charity corrupt him into slothfulness? What is his peculiar necessity? Is it the want of health, or the want of employment? Is it the pressure of a numerous family? Does he need medicine to administer to the diseases of his children? Does he need fuel or raiment to protect them from the inclemency of winter? Does he need money to satisfy the yearly demands of his landlord; or to purchase books, and to pay for the education of his offspring?

To give money is not to do all the work and labour of benevolence. You must go to the poor man's sick-bed. You must lend your hand to the work of assistance. You must examine his accounts. You must try to recover those debts which are due to his family. You must try to recover those wages which are detained by the injustice or the rapacity of his master. You must employ your mediation with his superiors. You must represent to them the necessities of his situation. You must solicit their assistance, and awaken their feelings to the tale of his calamity. This is benevolence in its plain, and sober, and substantial reality; though eloquence may have withheld its imagery, and poetry may have denied its graces and its embellishments. This is true and unsophisticated goodness. It

may be recorded in no earthly documents; but, if done under the influence of Christian principle—in a word, if done unto Jesus, it is written in the book of heaven, and will give a new lustre to that crown to which His disciples look forward in time, and will wear through eternity.

You have all heard of the division of labour, and I wish you to understand, that the advantage of this principle may be felt as much in the operations of charity, as in the operations of trade and of manufactures. The work of beneficence does not lie in the one act of giving money; there must be the act of attendance; there must be the act of inquiry; there must be the act of judicious application. But I can conceive that an individual may be so deficient in the varied experience and attention which a work so extensive demands, that he may retire in disgust and discouragement from the practice of charity altogether. The institution of a Society such as this, saves this individual to the cause. It takes upon itself all the subsequent acts in the work and labour of love, and restricts his part to the mere act of giving money. It fills the middle space between the dispensers and the recipients of charity. The habits of many who now hear me, may disqualify them for the work of examination. They may have no time for it; they may live at a distance from the objects; they may neither know how to introduce, nor how to conduct themselves in the management of all the details; their want of practice and of experience may disable them for the work of repelling imposition; they may try to gain the necessary habits; and it is right that every individual among us should each, in his own sphere, consider the poor, and qualify themselves for a judicious and discriminating charity. But, in the meantime, the Society for the Relief of the Destitute Sick, is an instrument ready-made to our hands. Avail yourselves of this instrument immediately; and, by the easiest part of the exercise of charity, which is to give money, you carry home to the poor all the benefit of its most difficult exercises.\* The experience which you want, the members of this laudable Society are in possession of. By the work and observation of years, a stock of practical wisdom is now accumulated among them. They have been long inured to all that is loathsome and discouraging in this good work; and they have nerve, and hardihood, and

\* A Society for the Destitute Sick, is not nearly liable to such an extent of objection as a Society for the Relief of General Indigence. But it were well, if they kept themselves rigidly to their assigned object; and that the cases to which they administered their aid, were competently certified.



principle, to front it. They are every way qualified to be the carriers of your bounty, for it is a path they have long travelled in. Give the money, and these conscientious men will soon bring it into contact with the right objects. They know the way through all the obscurities of this metropolis; and they can bring the offerings of your charity to people whom you will never see, and into houses which you will never enter. It is not easy to conceive, far less to compute the extent of human misery; but these men can give you experience for it. They can show you their registers of the sick and of the dying; they are familiar with disease in all its varieties of faintness, and breathlessness, and pain.—Sad union! they are called to witness it in conjunction with poverty; and well do they know that there is an eloquence in the imploring looks of these helpless poor, which no description can set before you. Oh! my brethren, figure to yourselves the calamity in all its soreness, and measure your bounty by the actual greatness of the claims, and not by the feebleness of their advocate.

I have trespassed upon your patience; but, at the hazard of carrying my address to a length that is unusual, I must still say more. Nor would I ever forgive myself if I neglected to set the eternity of the poor in all its importance before you. This is the second point of consideration to which I wish to direct you. The man who considers the poor will give his chief anxiety to the wants of their eternity. It must be evident to all of you that this anxiety is little felt. I do not appeal for the evidence of this to the selfish part of mankind—there we are not to expect it. I go to those who are really benevolent—who have a wish to make others happy, and who take trouble in so doing; and it is a striking observation, how little the salvation of these others is the object of that benevolence which makes them so amiable. It will be found that, in by far the greater number of instances, this principle is all consumed on the accommodations of time and the necessities of the body. It is the meat which feeds them—the garment which covers them—the house which shelters them—the money which purchases all things; these, I say, are what form the chief topics of benevolent anxiety. Now, we do not mean to discourage this principle. We cannot afford it; there is too little of it; and it forms too refreshing an exception to that general selfishness which runs throughout the haunts of business and ambition, for us to say anything against it. We are not cold-blooded enough to refuse our delighted concurrence to an

exercise so amiable in its principle, and so pleasing in the warm and comfortable spectacle which it lays before us. The poor, it is true, ought never to forget, that it is to their own industry, and to the wisdom and economy of their own management, that they are to look for the elements of subsistence—that if idleness and prodigality shall lay hold of the mass of our population, no benevolence, however unbounded, can ever repair a mischief so irrecoverable—that if they will not labour for themselves, it is not in the power of the rich to create a sufficiency for them; and that though every heart were opened, and every purse emptied in the cause, it would absolutely go for nothing towards forming a well-fed, a well-lodged, or a well-conditioned peasantry. Still, however, there are cases which no foresight could prevent, and no industry could provide for—where the blow falls heavy and unexpected on some devoted son or daughter of misfortune, and where, though thoughtlessness and folly may have had their share, benevolence, not very nice in its calculations, will feel the overpowering claim of actual, helpless, and imploring misery. Now, I again offer my cheerful testimony to such benevolence as this; I count it delightful to see it singling out its object, and sustaining it against the cruel pressure of age and of indigence; and when I enter a cottage where I see a warmer fireside, or a more substantial provision, than the visible means can account for, I say that the landscape in all its summer glories, does not offer an object so gratifying, as when referred to the vicinity of the great man's house, and the people who live in it, and am told that I will find my explanation *there*. Kind and amiable people! your benevolence is most lovely in its display, but oh! it is perishable in its consequences. Does it never occur to you, that in a few years this favourite will die—that he will go to the place where neither cold nor hunger will reach him, but that a mighty interest remains, of which both of us may know the certainty, though neither you nor I can calculate the extent. Your benevolence is too short—it does not shoot far enough ahead—it is like regaling a child with a sweetmeat or a toy, and then abandoning the happy unreflecting infant to exposure. You make the poor old man happy with your crumbs and your fragments, but he is an infant on the mighty range of infinite duration; and will you leave the soul, which has this infinity to go through, to its chance? How comes it that the grave should throw so impenetrable a shroud over the realities of eternity? How comes it that heaven, and hell, and judgment, should be

treated as so many nonentities ; and that there should be as little real and operative sympathy felt for the soul, which lives for ever, as for the body after it is dead, or for the dust into which it moulders ? Eternity is longer than time ; the arithmetic, my brethren, is all on our side upon this question ; and the wisdom which calculates, and guides itself by calculation, gives its weighty and respectable support to what may be called the benevolence of faith.

Now, if there be one employment more fitted than another to awaken this benevolence, it is the peculiar employment of that Society for which I am now pleading. I would have anticipated such benevolence from the situation they occupy, and the information before the public bears testimony to the fact. The truth is, that the diseases of the body may be looked upon as so many outlets through which the soul finds its way to eternity. Now, it is at these outlets that the members of this Society have stationed themselves. This is the interesting point of survey at which they stand, and from which they command a look of both worlds. They have placed themselves in the avenues which lead from time to eternity, and they have often to witness the awful transition of a soul hovering at the entrance—struggling its way through the valley of the shadow of death, and at last breaking loose from the confines of all that is visible. Do you think it likely that men, with such spectacles before them, will withstand the sense of eternity ? No, my brethren, they cannot, they have not. Eternity, I rejoice to announce to you, is not forgotten by them ; and with their care for the diseases of the body, they are neither blind nor indifferent to the fact, that the soul is diseased also. We know it well. There is an indolent and superficial theology which turns its eyes from the danger, and feels no pressing call for the application of the remedy—which reposes more in its own vague and self-assumed conceptions of the mercy of God, than in the firm and consistent representations of the New Testament—which overlooks the existence of the disease altogether, and therefore feels no alarm, and exerts no urgency in the business, which, in the face of all the truths and all the severities that are uttered in the word of God, leaves the soul to its chance ; or, in other words, by neglecting to administer anything specific for the salvation of the soul, leaves it to perish. We do not want to involve you in controversies ; we only ask you to open the New Testament, and attend to the obvious meaning of a word which occurs fre-

quently in its pages—we mean the word *saved*. The term surely implies, that the present state of the thing to be saved, is a lost and undone state. If a tree be in a healthful state from its infancy, you never apply the term *saved* to it, though you see its beautiful foliage, its flourishing blossoms, its abundant produce, and its progressive ascent through all the varieties incidental to a sound and prosperous tree. But if it were diseased in its infancy, and ready to perish, and if it were restored by management and artificial applications, then you would say of this tree that it was *saved*; and the very term implies some previous state of uselessness and corruption. What, then, are we to make of the frequent occurrence of this term in the New Testament, as applied to a human being? If men come into this world pure and innocent; and have nothing more to do but to put forth the powers with which nature has endowed them, and so to rise through the progressive stages of virtue and excellence, to the rewards of immortality, you would not say of these men that they were saved when they were translated to these rewards. These rewards of man are the natural effects of his obedience, and the term *saved* is not at all applicable to such a supposition. But the God of the Bible says differently. If a man obtain heaven at all, it is by being saved. He is in a diseased state; and it is by the healing application of the blood of the Son of God, that he is restored from that state. The very title applied to Him proves the same thing. He is called *our Saviour*. The deliverance which He effects is called our salvation. The men whom He doth deliver are called the *saved*. Doth not this imply some previous state of disease and helplessness? And from the frequent and incidental occurrence of this term, may we not gather an additional testimony to the truth of what is elsewhere more expressly revealed to us, that we are lost by nature, and that to obtain recovery, we must be found in Him who came to seek and to save that which is lost? He that believeth on the Son of God shall be saved; but he that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him.

We know that there are some who loathe this representation; but this is just another example of the substantial interests of the poor being sacrificed to mismanagement and delusion. It is to be hoped that there are many who have looked the disease fairly in the face, and are ready to reach forward the remedy adapted to relieve it. We should have no call to attend to the spiritual interests of men, if they could safely be left to themselves, and

to the spontaneous operation of those powers with which it is supposed that nature has endowed them. But this is not the state of the case. We come into the world with the principles of sin and condemnation within us ; and, in the congenial atmosphere of this world's example, these ripen fast for the execution of the sentence. During the period of this short but interesting passage to another world, the remedy is in the gospel held out to all ; and the freedom and universality of its invitations, while it opens assured admission to all who will, must aggravate the weight and severity of the sentence to those who will not ; and upon them the dreadful energy of that saying will be accomplished—"How shall they escape if they neglect so great a salvation?"

We know part of your labours for the eternity of the poor. We know that you have brought the Bible into contact with many a soul. And we are sure that this is suiting the remedy to the disease ; for the Bible contains those words which are the power of God through faith unto salvation, to every one who believes them.

To this established instrument for working faith in the heart, add the instrument of hearing. When you give the Bible, accompany the gift with the living energy of a human voice—let prayer, and advice, and explanation, be brought to act upon them ; and let the warm and deeply-felt earnestness of your hearts discharge itself upon theirs in the impressive tones of sincerity, and friendship, and good-will. This is going substantially to work. It is, if I may use the expression, bringing the right element to bear upon the case before you ; and be assured, that every treatment of a convinced and guilty mind is superficial and ruinous, which does not lead it to the Saviour, and bring before it His sacrifice and atonement, and the influences of that Spirit bestowed through His obedience on all who believe on Him.

While in the full vigour of health, we may count it enough to take up with something short of this. But—striking testimony to evangelical truth!—go to the awful reality of a human soul on the eve of its departure from the body, and you will find that all those vapid sentimentalities which partake not of the substantial doctrine of the New Testament, are good for nothing. Hold up your face, my brethren, for the truth and simplicity of the Bible. Be not ashamed of its phraseology. It is the right instrument to handle in the great work of calling a

human soul out of darkness into marvellous light. Stand firm and secure on the impregnable principle, that this is the word of God, and that all taste, and imagination, and science, must give way before its overbearing authority. Walk in the footsteps of your Saviour, in the twofold office of caring for the diseases of the body, and administering to the wants of the soul; and though you may fail in the former—though the patient may never rise and walk, yet, by the blessing of heaven upon your fervent and effectual endeavours, the latter object may be gained—the soul may be lightened of all its anxieties—the whole burden of its diseases may be swept away—it may be of good cheer, because its sins are forgiven—and the right direction may be impressed upon it which will carry it forward in progress to a happy eternity. Death may not be averted, but death may be disarmed. It may be stripped of its terrors, and instead of a devouring enemy, it may be hailed as a messenger of triumph.

## SERMON III.

*(Preach'd, June 2, 1814, at Edinburgh, before the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge.)*

## THE UTILITY OF MISSIONS ASCERTAINED BY EXPERIENCE.

“And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.”—*JOHN* i. 46.

THE principle of association, however useful in the main, has a blinding and misleading effect in many instances. Give it a wide enough field of induction to work upon, and it will carry you to a right conclusion upon any one case or question that comes before you. But the evil is, that it often carries you forward with as much confidence upon a limited, as upon an enlarged field of experience; and the man of narrow views will, upon a few paltry individual recollections, be as obstinate in the assertion of his own maxim, and as boldly come forward with his own sweeping generality, as if the whole range of nature and observation had been submitted to him.

To aggravate the mischief, the opinion thus formed upon the specialities of his own limited experience, obtains a holding and a tenacity in his mind, which dispose him to resist all the future facts and instances that come before him. Thus it is that the opinion becomes a prejudice; and that no statement, however true, or however impressive, will be able to dislodge it. You may accumulate facts upon facts; but the opinion he has already formed, has acquired a certain right of pre-occupancy over him. It is a law of the mind which, like the similar law of society, often carries it over the original principles of justice; and it is this which gives so strong a positive influence to error, and makes its overthrow so very slow and laborious an operation.

I know not the origin of the prejudice respecting the town of Nazareth; or what it was that give rise to an aphorism of such sweeping universality, as that no good thing could come out of it. Perhaps in two, three, or more instances, individuals may have

come out of it who threw a discredit over the place of their nativity, by the profligacy of their actions. Hence an association between the very name of the town and the villany of its inhabitants. The association forms into an opinion. The opinion is embodied into a proverb, and is transmitted in the shape of a hereditary prejudice to future generations. It is likely enough, that many instances could have been appealed to, of people from the town of Nazareth, who gave evidence in their characters and lives against the prejudice in question. But it is not enough that evidence be offered by the one party. It must be attended to by the other. The disposition to resist it must be got over. The love of truth and justice must prevail over that indolence which likes to repose, without disturbance, in its present convictions; and over that malignity which, I fear, makes a dark and hostile impression of others, too congenial to many hearts. Certain it is, that when the strongest possible demonstration was offered in the person of Him who was the finest example of the good and fair, it was found that the inveteracy of the prejudice could withstand it; and it is to be feared that with the question, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" there were many in that day who shut their eyes and their affections against Him.

Thus it was that the very name of a town, fastened an association of prejudice upon all its inhabitants. But this is only one example out of the many. A sect may be thrown into discredit by a very few of its individual specimens, and the same association be fastened upon all its members. A society may be thrown into discredit by the failure of one or two of its undertakings, and this will be enough to entail suspicion and ridicule upon all its future operations. A system may be thrown into discredit by the fanaticism and folly of some of its advocates; and it may be long before it emerges from the contempt of a precipitate and unthinking public, ever ready to follow the impulse of her former recollections—it may be long before it is reclaimed from obscurity by the eloquence of future defenders; and there may be the struggle and the perseverance of many years before the existing association, with all its train of obloquies and disgusts and prejudices, shall be overthrown.

A lover of truth is thus placed on the right field for the exercise of his principles. It is the field of his faith and of his patience, and in which he is called to a manly encounter with the enemies of his cause. He may have much to bear, and little



but the mere force of principle to uphold him. But what a noble exhibition of mind, when this force is enough for it; when, though unsupported by the sympathy of other minds, it can rest on the truth and righteousness of its own principle; when it can select its objects from among the thousand entanglements of error, and keep by it amidst all the clamours of hostility and contempt; when all the terrors of disgrace cannot alarm it; when all the levities of ridicule cannot shame it; when all the scowl of opposition cannot overwhelm it!

There are some very fine examples of such a contest, and of such a triumph, in the history of Philosophy. In the progress of speculation, the doctrine of the *occult qualities* fell into disrepute; and everything that could be associated with such a doctrine was disgraced and borne down by the authority of the reigning school. When Sir Isaac Newton's Theory of Gravitation was announced to the world, if it had not the persecution of violence, it had at least the persecution of contempt to struggle with. It had the sound of an occult principle, and it was charged with all the bigotry and mysticism of the schoolmen. This kept it out for a time from the chairs and universities of Europe, and for years a kind of obscure and ignoble sectarianism was annexed to that name which has been carried down on such a tide of glory to distant ages. Let us think of this, when philosophers bring their name and their authority to bear upon us, when they pour contempt on the truth which we love and on the system which we defend; and as they fasten their epithets upon us, let us take comfort in thinking, that we are under the very ordeal through which philosophy herself had to pass, before she achieved the most splendid of her victories.

Sure I am, that the philosophers of that age could not have a more impetuous contempt for the occult principle which they conceived to lie in the doctrine of gravitation, than many of our present philosophers have for the equally occult principle which they conceive to lie in the all-subduing efficacy of the Christian faith over every mind which embraces it. Each of these two doctrines is mighty in its pretensions. The one asserts a principle to be now in operation; and which, reigning over the material world, gives harmony to all its movements. The other asserts a principle which it wants to put into operation, to apply to all minds, to carry round the globe, and to visit with its influence all the accessible dominions of the moral world. Mighty anticipation! It promises to rectify all disorder; to extirpate

all vice ; to dry up the source of all those sins and sufferings and sorrows which have spread such dismal and unseemly ravages over the face of society ; to turn every soul from Satan unto God ; or, in other words, to annihilate that disturbing force which has jarred the harmony of the moral world, and make all its parts tend obediently to the Deity as its centre and its origin.

But how can this principle be put into operation? How shall it be brought into contact with a soul at the distance of a thousand miles from the place in which we are now standing? I know no other conceivable way than sending a messenger in possession of the principle himself, and able to convey it into the mind of another by his powers of communication. The precept of "Go and preach the gospel unto every creature," would obtain a very partial obedience indeed, if there was no actual moving of the preacher from one place or neighbourhood to another. Were he to stand still, he might preach to some creatures ; he might get a smaller or a larger number to assemble around him : and it is to be hoped, that, from the stationary pulpits of a Christian country, the preaching of the word has been made to bear with efficacy on the souls of multitudes. But in reference to the vast majority of the world, that may still be said which was said by an apostle in the infant state of our religion, "How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?" It is the single circumstance of being sent, which forms the peculiarity so much contended for by one part of the British public, and so much resisted by the other. The preacher who is so sent is, in good Latin, termed a *Missionary*; and such is the magical power which lies in the very sound of this hateful and obnoxious term, that it is no sooner uttered than a thousand associations of dislike and prejudice start into existence. And yet you would think it very strange: The term itself is perfectly correct, in point of etymology. Many of those who are so clamorous in their hostility against it, feel no contempt for the mere act of preaching, sit with all decency and apparent seriousness under it, and have a becoming respect for the character of a preacher. Convert the preacher into a *Missionary*, and all you have done is merely to graft upon the man's preaching the circumstance of locomotion. How comes it that the talent, and the eloquence, and the principle, which appeared so respectable in your eyes, so long as they stood still, lose all their respectability so soon as they begin to move? It is certainly conceivable, that the personal qualities which bear with

salutary influence upon the human beings of one place, may pass unimpaired and have the same salutary influence upon the human beings of another. But this is a missionary process; and though unable to bring forward any substantial exception against the thing, they cannot get the better of the disgust excited by the term. They cannot release their understanding from the influence of its old associations; and these philosophers are repelled from truth, and frightened out of the way which leads to it, by the bugbear of a name.

The precept is, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven." The people I allude to have no particular quarrel with the *preach*; but they have a mortal antipathy to the *go*:—and should even their own admired preacher offer to go himself, or help to send others, he becomes a missionary, or the advocate of a mission; and the question of my text is set up in resistance to the whole scheme, "Can any good thing come out of it?"

I never felt myself in more favourable circumstances for giving an answer to the question than I do at this moment, surrounded as I am by the members of a Society which has been labouring for upwards of a century in the field of missionary exertion. It need no longer be taken up or treated as a speculative question. The question of the text may, in reference to the subject now before us, be met immediately by the answer of the text, "Come and see." We call upon you to look to a set of actual performances, to examine the record of past doings; and, like good philosophers as you are, to make the sober depositions of history carry it over the reveries of imagination and prejudice. We deal in proofs, not in promises; in practice, not in profession; in experience, and not in experiment. The Society whose cause I am now appointed to plead in your hearing, is to all intents and purposes a Missionary Society. It has a claim to all the honour, and must just submit to all the disgrace which such a title carries along with it. It has been in the habit for many years of hiring preachers and teachers; and may be convicted, times without number, of the act of sending them to a distance. What the precise distance is I do not understand to be any of signification to the argument; but even though it should, I fear that in the article of distance, our Society has at times been as extravagant as many of her neighbours. Her labourers have been met with in other quarters of the world. They have been found among the haunts of savages. They have dealt with men in the very

infancy of social improvement; and their zeal for proselytism has far outstripped that sober preparatory management, which is so much contended for. Why, they have carried the gospel message into climes on which Europe had never impressed a single trace of her boasted civilisation. They have tried the species in the first stages of its rudeness and ferocity; nor did they keep back the offer of the Saviour from their souls, till art and industry had performed a sufficient part, and were made to administer in fuller abundance to the wants of their bodies. This process which has been so much insisted upon, they did not wait for. They preached and they prayed at the very outset, and they put into exercise all the weapons of their spiritual ministry. In a word, they have done all the fanatical and offensive things, which have been charged upon other missionaries. If there be folly in such enterprises as these, our Society has the accumulated follies of a whole century upon her forehead. She is among the vilest of the vile; and the same overwhelming ridicule which has thrown the mantle of ignominy over other societies, will lay all her honours and pretensions in the dust.

We are not afraid of linking the claims of our Society with the general merits of the Missionary cause. With this cause she stands or falls. When the spirit of missionary enterprise is afloat in the country, she will not be neglected among the multiplicity of other objects. She will not suffer from the number or the activity of kindred societies. They who conceive alarm upon this ground, have not calculated upon the productive powers of benevolence. They have not meditated deeply upon the operation of this principle, nor do they conceive how a general impulse given to the missionary spirit, may work the twofold effect of multiplying the number of societies, and of providing for each of them more abundantly than ever.

The fact is undeniable. In this corner of the empire, there is an impetuous and overbearing contempt for everything connected with the name of Missionary. The cause has been outraged by a thousand indecencies. Everything like the coolness of the philosophical spirit has been banished from one side of the controversy; and all the epithets of disgrace, which a perverted ingenuity could devise, have been unsparingly lavished on the noblest benefactors of the species. We have reason to believe that this opposition is not so extensive, nor so virulent, in England. It is due to certain provincial associations, and may be accounted for. It is more a Scottish peculiarity; and while,

with our neighbours in the south, it is looked upon as a liberal and enlightened cause—as a branch of that very principle which abolished the Slave-trade of Africa—as one of the wisest and likeliest experiments which, in this age of benevolent enterprise, is now making for the interests of the world—as a scheme ennobled by the patronage of royalty, supported by the contributions of opulence; sanctified by the prayers and the wishes of philanthropy; assisted by men of the first science, and the first scholarship; carrying into execution by as hardy adventurers as ever trode the desert in quest of novelty; and enriching grammar, geography, and natural knowledge, by the discoveries they are making every year, as to the statistics of all countries, and the peculiarities of all languages—While, I say, such are the dignified associations thrown around the Missionary cause in England; in this country I am sorry to tell a very different set of collaterals is annexed to it. A great proportion of our nobility, gentry, and clergy, look upon it as a very low and drivelling concern; as a visionary enterprise, and that no good thing can come out of it; as a mere dreg of sectarianism, and which none but sectarians, or men who should have been sectarians, have any relish or respect for. The torrent of prejudice runs strongly against it;—and the very name of Missionary excites the most nauseous antipathy in the hearts of many, who, in other departments, approve themselves to be able and candid and reflecting inquirers.

We have no doubt that in the course of years all this will pass away. But reason and experience are slow in their operation; and in the meantime, we count it fair to neutralize, if possible, one prejudice by another; to school down a Scottish antipathy by a Scottish predilection; and to take shelter from the contempt, that is now so blindly and so wantonly pouring on the best of causes, under the respected name of a society which has earned, by the services of a hundred years, the fairest claims on the gratitude and veneration of all our countrymen. Come and see the effect of her Missionary exertions. It is palpable, and near at hand. It lies within the compass of many a summer tour; and tell me, ye children of fancy, who expatiate with a delighted eye over the wilds of our mountain scenery, if it be not a dearer and a worthier exercise still, to contemplate the habits of her once rugged and wandering population. What would they have been at this moment, had Schools, and Bibles, and Ministers, been kept back from them? and had the men of

a century ago been deterred by the flippancies of the present age, from the work of planting chapels and seminaries in that neglected land? The ferocity of their ancestors would have come down, unsoftened and unsubdued, to the existing generation. The darkening spirit of hostility would still have lowered upon us from the North; and these plains, now so peaceful and so happy, would have lain open to the fury of merciless invaders. O ye soft and sentimental travellers who wander so securely over this romantic land, you are right to choose the season when the angry elements of nature are asleep! But what is it that has charmed to their long repose the more dreadful elements of human passion and human injustice? What is it that has quelled the boisterous spirit of her natives?—and while her torrents roar as fiercely, and her mountain brows look as grimly as ever, what is that which has thrown so softening an influence over the minds and manners of her living population?

I know that there are several causes; but sure I am, that the civilizing influence of our Society has had an important share. If it be true that our country is indebted to her Schools and her Bibles for the most intelligent and virtuous peasantry in Europe, let it never be forgotten that the Schools in the establishment of our Society are nearly equal to one-third of all the parishes in Scotland; that these Schools are chiefly to be met with in the Highland district; that they bear as great a proportion to the Highland population, as all our parochial seminaries do to all our population; or in other words, had the local convenience for the attendance of scholars been as great as in other parts of the country, the apparatus set agoing by our Society, for the education of the Highland peasantry, would have been as effective as the boasted provision of the Legislature for the whole of Scotland.

I pass over the attempts of our Society to introduce the knowledge of the arts and the habits of useful industry amongst them. I have not room for everything. And to reclaim, if possible, the prejudices of those who I fear have little sympathy with the wants of the ever-during soul, I have been lingering all the while upon the inferior ground of temporal advantage. But I may detain you for hours upon this ground; and after all I have said about a more peaceful neighbourhood, and a more civilized peasantry, I may positively have said nothing upon the essential merits of the cause. I can conceive the wish of his present Majesty, that every one in his dominions may be able to read

the Bible—to meet an echo in every bosom. But why? Because the very habit of reading implies a more intelligent people;—and must stand associated in every mind with habits of order, and comfort, and decency. But separate these from the religious principle, and what are they? At the very best, they are the virtues of a life. Their office is to scatter a few fleeting joys over a short and uncertain pilgrimage; and to deck a temporary scene with blessings, which are to perish and be forgotten. No! in our attempts to carry into effect the principle of being all things to all men, let us never exalt that which is subordinate; let us never give up our reckoning upon eternity—or be ashamed to own it as our sentiment, that, though schools were to multiply, though missionaries were to labour, and all the decencies and accomplishments of social life were to follow in their train—the great object would still be unattained, so long as the things of the Holy Spirit were unrelished and undiscerned amongst them, and they wanted that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, which is life everlasting. This is the ground upon which every Christian will rest the vindication of every Missionary enterprise: and this is the ground upon which he may expect to be abandoned by the infidel who laughs at piety; or the lukewarm believer who dreads to be laughed at for the extravagance to which he carries it. The Christian is not for giving up the social virtues; but the open enemy and the cold friend of the gospel are for giving up piety: and while they garnish all that is right and amiable in humanity with the unsubstantial praises of their eloquence, they pour contempt upon that very principle which forms our best security for the existence of virtue in the world. We say nothing that can degrade the social virtues in the estimation of men; but, by making them part of religion, we exalt them above all that poet or moralist can do for them. We give them God for their object, and for their end the grandeur of eternity. No! it is not the Christian who is the enemy of social virtue; it is he who sighs in all the ecstasy of sentiment over it, at the very time that he is digging away its foundation, and wreaking on that piety which is its principle the cruelty of his scorn.

It is very well in its place to urge the civilizing influence of a Missionary Society. But this is not the main object of such an institution. It is not the end. It is only the accompaniment. It is a never-failing collateral, and may be used as a lawful instrument in fighting the battles of the Missionary cause. It

is right enough to hold contest with our enemies at every one point of advantage ; and for this purpose to descend, if necessary, to the very ground on which they have posted themselves. But, when so engaged, let us never forget the main elements of our business ; for there is a danger that—when turning the eye of our antagonists to the lovely picture of peace, and industry, and cultivation, raised by many a Christian missionary, among the wilds of heathenism—we turn it away from the very marrow and substance of our undertaking ; the great aim of which is to preach Christ to sinners, and to rear human souls to a beauteous and never-fading immortality.

The wish of our pious and patriotic king, that every man in his dominions might be able to read the Bible, has circulated through the land. It has been commented upon with eloquence ; and we doubt not, that something like the glow of a virtuous sensibility has been awakened by it. But let us never forget, that in the breasts of many, all this may be little better than a mere theatrical emotion. Give me the man who is in the daily habit of opening his Bible, who willingly puts himself into the attitude of a little child when he reads it, and casts an unshrinking eye over its information and its testimony. This is the way of giving an effect and consistency to their boasted admiration of the royal sentiment. The mere admiration in itself indicates nothing. It may be as little connected with the sturdiness of principle as the finery of any poetical delusion. Oh ! it is easy to combine a vague and general testimony to the Bible, with a disgusted feeling of antipathy to the methodism of its actual contents ; and thousands can profess to make it their rallying-point who pour contempt upon its doctrines and give the lie to the faithfulness of its sayings.

Let us put you to the trial. The Bible tells us, that “ he who believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” It calls upon us “ to preach the gospel to every creature,” that every creature may believe it ; for he who so “ believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” Such is the mighty difference between believing and not believing. It makes all the difference between hell and heaven. He who believeth, hath passed from death even unto life ; and the errand of the missionary is to carry these overtures to the men of all languages, and all countries, that he may prevail upon them to make this transition. Some reject his overtures, and to them the gospel is the savour of death unto death.



Others embrace them, and to them the gospel is the savour of life unto life. Whatever be his reception, he counts it his duty and his business to preach the gospel; and if he get some to hear, and others to forbear, he just fares as the apostles did before him. Now, my brethren, have we got among the substantial realities of the Missionary cause. We have carried you forward from the accessaries to the radical elements of the business; and if you, offended at the hardness of these sayings, feel as if now we had got within the confines of methodism—then know that this feeling arose in your minds at the very moment that we got within the four corners of the Bible; and your fancied admiration of this book, however exquisitely felt or eloquently uttered, is nothing better than the wretched flummery of a sickly and deceitful imagination.

Our venerable Society has given the sanction of her example to the best and the dearest objects of missionaries. Like others, she has kept a wakeful eye over all that could contribute to the interest of the species. She has given encouragement to art and to industry; but she has never been diverted from the religion of the people, as the chief aim of all her undertakings. To this end she has multiplied schools, and made the reading of the Scriptures the main acquirement of her scholars. The Bible is her school-book, and it is to her that the Highlands of Scotland owe the translation of the Sacred Record into their own tongue. She sends preachers as well as teachers amongst them. As she has made the reading of the Word a practicable acquirement, so she has made the hearing of the Word an accessible privilege. In short, she has set up what may be called a Christian apparatus in many districts, which the Legislature of the country had left unprovided for. She is filling up the blanks which, among the scattered and extended parishes of the North, occur so frequently over the broad surface of a thinly peopled country. She has come in contact with those remoter groupes and hamlets, which the influence of the Establishment did not reach. And she has multiplied her endowments at such a rate—that very many people have got Christian instruction in its different branches as nearly, and as effectively to bear upon them, as in the more favoured districts of the land.

When a wealthy native of a Highland parish, penetrated with a feeling of the wants of his neighbours, erects a chapel, or endows a seminary among them, his benevolence is felt and acknowledged by all; and I am not aware of a single associa-

tion which can disturb our moral estimate of such a proceeding, or restrain the fulness of that testimony which is due to it. But should an individual, at a distance from the parish in question, do the same thing; should he, with no natural claim upon him, and without the stimulus of any of those affections which the mere circumstance of vicinity is fitted to inspire; should he, I say, merely upon a moving representation of their necessities, devote his wealth to the same cause; what influence ought this to have upon our estimate of his character? Why, in all fairness, it should just lead us to infer a stronger degree of the principle of philanthropy—a principle which in his case was unaided by any local influence whatever; and which urged him to exertion and to sacrifice, in the face of an obstacle which the other had not to contend with—the obstacle of distance. Now what one individual may be conceived to do for one parish, a number of individuals may do for a number of parishes. They may form into a Society; and combine their energies and their means for the benefit of the whole country; and, should that country lie at a distance, the only way in which it affects our estimate of their exertions—is by leading us to see in them a stronger principle of attachment to the species; and a more determined zeal for the object of their benevolence, in spite of the additional difficulties with which it is encumbered.

Now the principle does not stop here. In the instance before us, it has been carried from the metropolis of Scotland to the distance of her northern extremities. But tell me, why it might not be carried round the globe. This very Society has carried it over the Atlantic; and the very apparatus which she has planted in the Highlands and Islands of our own country, she has set agoing more than once in the wilds of America. The very discipline which she has applied to her own population, she has brought to bear on human beings in other quarters of the world. She has wrought with the same instruments upon the same materials; and, as in sound philosophy it ought to have been expected, she has obtained the same result—a Christian people rejoicing in the faith of Jesus; and ripening for heaven, by a daily progress upon earth, in the graces and accomplishments of the gospel. I have yet to learn what that is which should make the same teaching and the same Bible, applicable to one part of the species, and not applicable to another. I am not aware of a single principle in the philosophy of man which points to such a distinction; nor do I know a single category in

the science of human nature, which can assist me in drawing the landmark between those to whom Christianity may be given, and those who are unworthy or unfit for the participation of its blessings. I have been among illiterate peasantry; and I have marked how apt they were in their narrow field of observation, to cherish a kind of malignant contempt for the men of another shire, or another country. I have heard of barbarians, and of their insolent disdain for foreigners. I have read of Jews, and of their unsocial and excluding prejudices. But I always looked upon these as the jealousies of ignorance, which science and observation had the effect of doing away; and that the accomplished traveller, liberalized by frequent intercourse with the men of other countries, saw through the vanity of all these prejudices and disowned them. Now what the man of liberal philosophy is in sentiment, the missionary is in practice. He sees in every man a partaker of his own nature, and a brother of his own species. He contemplates the human mind in the generality of its great elements. He enters upon the wide field of benevolence; and disdains those geographical barriers by which little men would shut out one-half of the species from the kind offices of the other. His business is with man; and, let his localities be what they may, enough for his large and noble heart, that he is bone of the same bone. To get at him, he will shun no danger, he will shrink from no privation, he will spare himself no fatigue, he will brave every element of heaven, he will hazard the extremities of every clime, he will cross seas, and work his persevering way through the briers and thickets of the wilderness. In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by the heathen, in weariness and painfulness, he seeks after him. The cast and the colour are nothing to the comprehensive eye of a missionary. His is the broad principle of good-will to the children of men. His doings are with the species; and overlooking all the accidents of climate or of country, enough for him, if the individual he is in quest of be a man—a brother of the same nature—with a body which a few years will bring to the grave, and a spirit that returns to the God who gave it.

But this man of large and liberal principles is a missionary; and this is enough to put to flight all admiration of him, and of his doings. I forbear to expatiate; but sure I am that certain philosophers of the day, and certain fanatics of the day, should be made to change places; if those only are the genuine philosophers who keep to principles in spite of names, and those

only the genuine fanatics who are ruled by names instead of principles.

The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, has every claim upon a religious public; and I trust that those claims will not be forgotten among the multiplicity of laudable and important objects which are now afloat in this age of benevolent enterprise. She has all the experience and respectability and tried usefulness of age; may she have none of the infirmities of age. May she have nothing either of the rust or the indolence of an establishment about her. Resting on the consciousness of her own righteous and strongly-supported cause, may she look on the operations of other societies with complacency, and be jealous of none of them. She confers with them upon their common objects; she assists them with her experience: And when, struggling with difficulties, they make their appeal to the generosity of the Christian world, she nobly leads the way; and imparts to them, with liberal hand, out of her own revenue. She has conferred lasting obligations upon the Missionary cause. She spreads over it the shelter of her venerable name; and by the answer of "Come and see," to those who ask if any good thing can come out of it, she gives a practical refutation to the reasonings of all its adversaries. She redeems the best of causes from the unmerited contempt under which it labours, and she will be repaid. The religious public will not be backward to own the obligation. We are aware of the prevalence of the Missionary spirit, and of the many useful directions in which it is now operating. But we are not afraid of the public being carried away from us. We know that there is room for all, that there are funds for all; and our policy is not to repress, but to excite the Missionary spirit, and then there will be a heart for all.

## SERMON IV.

*(Preached first for a Female Society in Dunfermline, in 1814; then for an Orphan Hospital; and lastly, for the Society of the Sons of the Clergy, in Glasgow, on March 30, 1815.)\**

ON THE SUPERIOR BLESSEDNESS OF THE GIVER TO THAT OF THE RECEIVER.

"I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak; and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—ACTS xx. 35.

JOHN, at the end of his Gospel, spoke of the multitude of other things which Jesus did, and which he could not find room for in the compass of his short history. Now, what is true of the doings of our Saviour, I hold to be equally true of the sayings of our Saviour. There are many thousands of these sayings not recorded. The four Gospels were written within some years after His death, and though I have no doubt of the promise being accomplished upon the apostles, that the Spirit would bring all things to their remembrance, in virtue of which promise, we have all things told of Jesus necessary for our guidance here, and our salvation hereafter—yet I have as little doubt, when I think of the length and frequency of His conversations with the people around Him, that many, and very many of the gracious words which fell from His mouth, have not been transmitted to us in any written history whatever. They may have been kept alive by tradition for a few years. They may have been handed from one to another by mere oral communication. There is no doubt that they served every purpose for which they were uttered—but, in the lapse of one or two generations, they ceased to be talked of, and have now vanished from all earthly remembrance.

But there is one, and only one, of these sayings, which, though not recorded in any of the Gospels, has escaped the fate of all the rest. In the course of its circulation among the disciples of that period, it reached the apostle Paul, and he has thought fit to preserve it. It seems to have obtained a general currency among Christians; for he speaks of it to the elders of Ephesus, as if

\* See "Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers," vol. i. pp. 348-352, cheap edition.

they had heard it before. He quotes it as a saying known to them as well as to himself. We have no doubt that it was held in reverence, and referred to, and might have been talked of for many years in the churches. But it would at length have sunk into forgetfulness, with the crowd of other unrecorded sayings, had not Paul caught hold of it in its progress to oblivion; and, by placing it within the confines of written history, he has made it imperishable. It has got within the four corners of that book, of which it is said, "If any man take away from the words of it, he shall be accursed." He was the Son of God who uttered it; and it is striking enough, that, when unnoticed and unrecorded by all the evangelists, the apostle of the Gentiles, born out of due time, was the instrument of transmitting it to posterity. Precious memorial! There was no chance of its ever being lost to the Christian church, for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and without it the volume of inspiration would not have been completed. But surely the very circumstances of its being overlooked by the professed historians of our Saviour—of its being left for a time to fluctuate among all the chances and all the uncertainties of verbal communications—of its being selected by the revered apostle of the Gentiles, from among the crowd of similar sayings which were suffered to perish for ever from the memory of the world—of his putting his hand upon it, and arresting its march to that forgetfulness to which it was so fast hastening—All these have surely the effect of endearing it the more to our hearts, and should lead the thoughtful Christian to look upon the words of my text with a more tender and affecting veneration.

In discoursing from these words, I shall first direct your attention to those Christians who occupy such a condition of life that they may give; and, secondly, to those Christians who occupy such a condition of life that they must receive.

I will not attempt to draw the precise boundary between these two conditions. Each individual among you must determine the question for himself. It is not for me to sit in judgment upon your circumstances; but know that a day is coming, when all these secrets shall be laid open—and when the God who seeth every heart shall tell with unerring discernment, whether the selfishness of diseased nature or the charity of the gospel, had the rule over it.

I.—First, then, as to those Christians who occupy such a con-

dition of life that they may give. It is more blessed for them to give than to receive. (1.) Because in so doing, they are like unto God; and to be formed again after His image, is the great purpose of the dispensation we sit under. We have nothing that we did not receive, but we cannot say so of God. He is the un-failing fountain out of which everything flows. All originates in Him. A mighty tide of communication from God to His creatures, has been kept up incessantly from the first hour of creation. It flows without intermission. It spreads over the whole extent of the universe He has formed. It carries light, and sustenance, and enjoyment, through the wide dominions of Nature and of Providence. It reaches to the very humblest individual among His children. There is not one shred or fragment in the awful immensity of His works which is overlooked by Him; and, wonderful to tell, the same God whose arm is abroad over all worlds, has His eye fastened attentively upon every one of us, compasses all our goings, gives direction to every footstep, sustains us and holds us together through every minute of our existence—and, at the very time that we are living in forgetfulness of Him, walking in the counsel of our own hearts, and after the sight of our own eyes—is the universal Creator at the right hand of each and of all of us, to give us every breath which we draw, and every comfort which we enjoy.

Oh! but you may think it is nothing to Him, to open His hand liberally. He may give and give, and be as full as ever. He loses nothing by communication. But we cannot part with anything to another, without depriving ourselves. Such an objection as this proceeds from an unscriptural view of God. In the eye of a cold natural theology, He is regarded as a Being who has nothing in Him answering to that which we feel in ourselves—when, by a laborious exercise of self-denial, we perform some great and painful act of liberality. The theology of nature, or rather of the schools, makes an orderly distribution of the attributes of God; and, conceiving His power to be some kind of physical and resistless energy, it also conceives that He can accomplish every deed of benevolence however exalted it may be without so much as the feeling of a sacrifice. Now this, I think, is not the lesson of the Bible. He who hath seen the Father, and is alone competent to declare Him, gives me a somewhat different view of what I venture to call the constitution of the Deity. Does not He tell us, that to be kind to our friends is no great matter; and then He bids us be kind to our enemies,

and upon what principle?—That we may be like unto God. Now in the exercise of kindness to enemies, there is something going on in our minds totally different from what goes on in the exercise of kindness to friends; and I do not see the significancy of the argument at all, unless you grant me, that there must be a difference corresponding to this in the mind of the Deity. In the exercise of kindness to the man who hates you, there is a preference of his good to the indulgence of your own resentment—there is a victory over the natural tendencies of your constitution—there is a struggling with these tendencies—there is an act of forbearance—there is a triumph of the principle of love, over a painful and urgent sense of provocation. Now, if in all this we are like unto God, must there not be something similar to all this in the benevolence of God? Or in other words, there must be something in His character, corresponding to that which imparts a character of sublime elevation to the meek and persevering charity of an injured Christian.

But again. When we are told that God *so* loved the world, as to send His only-begotten Son into it, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life—what is the meaning of the emphatic *so*? It means nothing at all, if God, in the act of giving up His Son to death, did not make the same kind of sacrifice with the parent who, amid the agonies of his struggling bosom, surrenders his only child at some call of duty or of patriotism. If it was at the bidding of God that Abraham entertained strangers, this was some proof of his love to Him. But it was a much higher proof of it that he so loved Him, as to be in readiness, at His requirement, to offer up Isaac. Now there is something analogous to this in God. It proves His love to men, that He opens His hand, and feeds them all out of the exuberance which flows from it; but it is a higher proof of love that He so loved them as to give up His only-begotten Son in their behalf.

And the argument loses all its impression, if God did not experience a something in His mind, corresponding to that which is felt by an earthly parent—when, keeping all the struggles of his natural tenderness under the control of principle, he gives up his son at the impulse of some pure and lofty requirement. Dismiss then, my brethren, all your scholastic conceptions of the Deity; and keep by that warm and affecting view of Him that we have in the Bible. For if we do not, we will lose the impression of many of its most moving arguments; and our hearts



will remain shut against its most powerful and pathetic representations of the character of God. To come back then upon this objection, that it is nothing to God to open His hand liberally, for He may give and give, and be as full as ever. And does God make no sacrifice in the act of giving unto you? A pure and unfallen angel would not detract from the praises of His Creator—by language such as this. And what are you? A rebel to His laws, who will yet persist in saying, that God, by feeding you with His bounty, is making no sacrifice. Why, He is holding you up though you be a spectacle injurious to His honour. He is grieved with you every day, and yet every day He loads you with His benefits. Every sinner is an offence to Him, and what restrains Him from sweeping the offence away from the face of His creation altogether? It is of His mercies that you are not consumed—that He still bears with you—that He keeps you in life and in all that is necessary to life—that He holds on with you a little longer and a little longer—that He plies you with warnings and opportunities; and brings the voice of a beseeching God to bear upon you, calling you to turn and be reconciled and live—What! has He never for your sakes given up anything that is dear and valuable to Himself? Did not He give up His Son to the death for you? All your gifts to the poor are nothing to this. When Abraham lifted up the knife over his son Isaac—he felt that he was making a mightier and more painful sacrifice, than by all his alms-deeds and hospitalities. God had compassion on the parental feelings of Abraham, and He spared them. But He spared not His own Son. He gave Him up for us all. And shall we, when we give up a trifling proportion of our substance to the relief of our poorer brethren, talk of the sacrifice we are making—as if there was nothing like it in the benevolence of God? Talk not then of your deprivations and your sacrifices. But “be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Under this particular, I have one practical direction to come forward with. When you do an act of benevolence, think of the extent of the sacrifice you have made by it. It is a delightful exercise to be kind among people who have a sense of your kindness—to give away money, if you get an ample return of gratitude back again—to pay a visit of tenderness to the poor family, who load you with their acknowledgments and their blessings—when you are received with the smile of welcome; and soothed by the soft accents of the widow who prays for a reward upon

you, or of the children who hail you as an angel of mercy. Oh, it is easy to move gently along through such scenes and families as these. But have a care that you are not ministering all the while to your own indulgence and your own vanity; for then verily I say unto you, "you have your reward." The charity of the gospel is not the fine and exquisite feeling of poetry. It is a sturdy and enduring principle. It carries you through the rough and discouraging realities of life, and it enables you to stand them; and it is only, my brethren, when you can be kind in spite of ingratitude—when you can give to the poor man, not because he thanks you, but because he needs it—when you can be unwearied in well-doing amid all the bitterness of envy and all the growlings of discontent—Then, and then only is it, that you endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ Jesus; or can be called the children of the Highest, who is kind to the unthankful and the evil, and sendeth down His rain on the just and on the unjust.

(2.) It is more blessed to give than to receive—for to give as a Christian, is to part with that which is temporal, and to show a preference for that which is eternal. By an alms-deed you give up part of this world's goods. By a piece of service, you give up a part of this world's ease. By an act of civility, you give up to another that time which might have been employed in the prosecution of some design or interest of your own. But, lest I flatter you into a delusive security, I again recur to the question, "What is the extent of the sacrifice?" For I am well aware, that the part thus given up may be so small, as to be no evidence whatever of a mind bent upon eternity. You may gratify your feelings of compassion at an expense so small, that you cannot be said to have made any sacrifice. You may gain the good-will of all your neighbours by this act of kindness, and count the purchase a cheap one. You may gratify your love of ostentation by an act of alms-giving, and do it upon as easy terms, as you gratify your love of amusement by an act of attendance upon the ball-room or the theatre. You may lay out your penny a week, and be amply repaid for the sacrifice, by the distinction of being one of a society, and by the pleasure of sharing in the business of it. In all this you have your reward; but I do not yet see any evidence of a soul setting its affections upon the things above in all this. Oh no, my brethren! A benevolent society is a very pleasurable exhibition; and I trust that

in the one I am now pleading for, there is much of that genuine principle which shrinks from the pollution of vanity. But were I to bestow that praise upon the mere act which only belongs to the principle, I might incur all the guilt of a lying prophet. I might be saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." I might be proclaiming the praise of God, to him who had already sought and obtained his reward in the praise of man. I might be regaling with the full prospect of heaven, him whose heart tends to the earth, and is earthly—whose trifling charity has not the weight of a straw upon the luxury of his table, or the yearly amount of that accumulating wealth upon which he sets his confidence. Were I, my brethren, who have come from a distance, to adopt the language of a polite and insinuating flattery, and send you all away so safe and so satisfied with the charities you have performed—I might be doing as much mischief, as if I travelled the country, and revived the old priestly trade of the sale of indulgences. None more ready than a Christian to enter into a scheme of benevolence; but let it never be forgotten, that a scheme of benevolence may be entered into by many, who fall miserably short of the altogether Christian. O what a multitude of men and of women may be found, who can give their pennies a week with the hand, while their heart is still with the treasures of a perishable world. Our Saviour was rich, and for our sake He became poor. Here was the extent of His sacrifice. Now we may give in a thousand directions for the sake of others, and yet be sensibly as rich as ever. I am not calling upon you to make any great or romantic sacrifice. I do not ask you, in deed and in performance, to forsake all; but I say that you are short of what you ought to be, if you are not in readiness to forsake all upon a clear warning. I say that you may give your name to every subscription-list, and bestow your something upon every petitioner; and yet stand at an infinite distance from the example you are called upon to imitate. The great point of inquiry should be, "Is the heart right with God?" Now I want to save you from a common delusion, when I tell you, that, out of your crumbs and fragments, many a Lazarus may be fed—while yet, like Dives, your heart may be wholly set upon the meat that perisheth. It is well, and very well, that you are a member of a benevolent society; and I shall rejoice to think of it as one of the smaller fruits of that mighty principle which brings the whole heart under its dominion—which makes you willing to renounce self and all its earthly interests at the call

of duty—which sinks the pursuits and enjoyments of time in the prospects of eternity—Such a principle as would not merely dictate the surrender of a penny for the poverty of a neighbour, but would dictate the surrender of every earthly distinction and enjoyment on the clear call of conscience or Revelation—Such a principle as has often been put to the trial in those woful seasons, when a sweeping tide of bankruptcy sets in upon a country; and the sanguine speculations of one man, on the false statements of another, have involved many an innocent sufferer in the loss of all that belongs to him. Could I obtain a view of his heart now, I might collect a more satisfying evidence of the way in which it stands affected by the things of another world, than I possibly could do, from all the odd fractions of his wealth, which he made over to his poorer brethren in the day of prosperity. When stript bare of his earthly possessions, is the hope of eternity enough for him? Is his heart filled with the agonies of resentment and despair; or with peaceful resignation to the will of God, and charity to the human instrument of his sufferings? Now is the time for the fair trial of his principles; and now may we learn if to him belongs the blessedness of enduring it. And it will go further to prove his claim to the kingdom of heaven, than all the charities of his brighter days—if trust in Providence, and prayer for the forgiveness of those who have injured him, shall be found to occupy and to sustain his heart under the fallen fortunes of his family.

There may be no call upon you to surrender all, in which case you are spared the very act of a surrender. But God who is the discernor of the heart, sees whether yours is in such a state of principle, as to be in readiness for the surrender, so soon as a clear requirement of conscience is upon you. Were persecution again to light up its fires in this land of quietness—it is to be hoped, that there are many who would cheerfully take the spoiling of their goods, rather than abandon the cause of the gospel. They have not the opportunity of manifesting themselves to the world; but the discerning eye of God stands in no need of such a manifestation. He can fathom all the secrecies of the inner man; and, in the great day of the revelation of hidden things, it will be seen who they are that would have forsaken all to follow after Christ.

Such as these, may have no opportunity of showing the whole extent of their devotion to Christ by an actual performance. But though we cannot speak to their performance, we can speak

to their principle. They sit loose to the interests of this world, and their heart is fully directed to the treasure which is in heaven. They have the willing mind; and, whenever their means and their opportunities allow, they will show that they have it. The thing given may be in itself so very small as to be no evidence whatever of the preference of eternity over time. Think not, then, that by the giving of this thing, you will obtain heaven. Heaven, my brethren, is not so purchased. You are made meet for heaven by the Spirit working in your soul a conformity to the image of the Saviour; and if the charity which filled His heart, actuate and inflame yours, it will carry you forward with a mighty impulse to every likely or practicable scheme for the interests of humanity, and for the alleviation of all its sufferings.

Before I pass on to the second head of discourse, I shall give my answer to a question, which may have been prompted by some of the observations I have already come forward with.

Does not the very object of this Society, it may be asked, furnish the opportunity we are in quest of? May it not put the whole extent of a Christian's principles to the test? Has he it not in his power to forsake all in following the injunction of Christ, "Be willing to distribute, and ready to communicate"? What is to hinder him from selling all his goods to feed the poor? And if his penny a week be no decisive evidence of the Christian principle which actuates him, may not the evidence be made still more decisive, by throwing his all into the treasury of our beneficence?

When a Christian has a clear and urgent call of conscience upon him, it is his duty to obey that call in the face of every sacrifice, however painful, and however mortifying. But it is also his duty to inform and to enlighten his conscience; and if with this view he were to cast about for advice, and do me the honour of making me one of his advisers, I would submit to him the following short representation.

There are many ways in which a man may show that he has less value for this world's wealth, than his neighbours around him. Why? He may do so by putting forth his hand to destroy it. He may set it on fire. He may strip himself of all that belongs to him by throwing it away; but none will give to such fanatical extravagancies as these, the credit which is only due to the spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind.

It is not enough, then, that you prove your indifference to

this world's wealth by parting with it; you must have an object in parting with it, and the question is, What should that object be? Now the feeding of the poor is only one of the many objects, for which you are intrusted with the gifts of Providence. You are called upon to love your neighbour as yourself; but you are not called upon to love him better than yourself. Your own subsistence is an object, therefore, which it is not your duty to surrender. This is one limit; and there are many others. If you provide not for your own family, you are worse than an infidel. Your parents have a claim upon you. You may be rich; and though I do not speak of it as a positive duty, to maintain the rank and distinction which belong to you, yet you are allowed by Christianity to do so. The New Testament recognises the gradations of society; and it numbers the rich and the noble among the disciples of the Saviour. Add to all this, that if the whole disposable wealth of the country was turned to the one direction of feeding the poor—what would become of the others, ay, and of the worthier objects of Christian benevolence? Have not the poor souls as well as bodies? Must they not be taught as well as fed? Are the narrow limits of our own parish, or even our own island, to be impassable barriers to our charity? Did not the same Saviour who said, Give to him that asketh, say also, Go and preach my gospel to every creature under heaven; and that The labourer is worthy of his hire? Those who cannot preach may at least hire; and if the whole stream of our disposable wealth were turned to the one object of relieving the temporal necessities of others—what would become of those sublime enterprises, by which, under the promise of Heaven, we send the light of Christianity, and all its blessings, over the wide and dreary extent of that moral wilderness that is everywhere around us—by which we carry the message of peace into the haunts of savages, and speed the arrival of those millennial days, when the sacred principles of good-will to men shall circulate through the world; and when the sun, from its rising to its going down, shall witness the people of all the countries it shines upon, to be the members of one great and universal family?

But more than this—if every shilling of the disposable wealth of the country were given to feed the poor, it would create more poverty than it provides for. It would land us in all the mischief of a depraved and beggarly population. That subsistence which they could obtain from the prodigal and injudicious

clarity of others, they would never think of earning for themselves. Idleness and profligacy would lay hold of the great mass of our peasantry. Every honourable desire after independence would be extinguished; and the people of the land, thrown loose from every call to the exertions of regular industry, would spread disorder over the whole face of the country. It does not occur to the soft daughters of sensibility, but it is not on that account the less true—that if every purse were emptied in the cause of poverty, here would be more want and hunger and hardship in our neighbourhood than there is at this moment. With the extension of your fund, you would just multiply the crowd of competitors—each pressing forward for his share, and jostling out his more modest and unobtrusive neighbour, who would be left to pine in secret over his untold and unnoticed indigence. The clamorous and undeserving poor, would in time spread themselves over the whole of that ground which should only be occupied by the children of helplessness; and, after the expenditure of millions, it would be found that there was more unrelieved want, and more unsoftened wretchedness in the country, than ever.

II.—I now come to a far more effectual check upon the mischiefs I have alluded to, than even the judgment and cautious inquiry of the giver. I proceed, in the second place, to the duties of those who are placed in such a situation of life, as to become receivers; and the first thing I have to propose to them is, that, if it be more blessed to give than to receive, then it is merely putting this assertion of my text into another form, when I say that it is less blessed to receive than to give. There may be something in this to startle and alarm the feelings of the poor. What! they may say, is our poverty a crime in the eye of Heaven? Are we to be punished for our circumstances? Are we to be degraded into an inferior degree of blessedness, because our situation imposes upon us the painful necessity of receiving from another, what, with all our industry, we cannot earn for ourselves? We always understood the gospel to be a message of glad tidings to the poor; that its richest consolations were addressed to them; that through it God had chosen the poor of this world to be heirs of the promised kingdom—and shall we now be told that the man who gives, because his situation enables him so to do, is more blessed than he who is forced by his situation to be a receiver?

In answer to this I have to observe, that man is neither punished nor rewarded for his circumstances—that the kingdom is only withheld from the rich, when they set their confidence and their affections on the world, and despise the offered salvation; and the poor obtain an interest in the gospel, not because they are poor, but it is because they are rich in faith, that they are heirs of that kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him.

How often shall we have to repeat it, that it is not the deed of the hand that God looks to, but the dictate of the heart which gave rise to it? On this simple principle I undertake to prove that the very poorest among you, though you have not a penny to bestow on the necessities of others, may obtain, not the lower blessedness of him who accepts of charity, but the higher blessedness of him who dispenses it; and that even though so humble in situation as to be a daily dependant on another's bounty, you may stand higher in the book of God's remembrance than even he whose liberality sustains you, and by the crumbs and fragments of whose table you are kept from starvation.

Let me first take the case of those poor, who are really not able to give; but who, by the struggles of a painful and honourable industry, have just kept themselves above the necessity of receiving. Had they been a little more idle, and a little more thriftless—a thing which very often they might easily have been without censure and without observation, they behoved to come upon your charity. They could have made good a legal claim to a part at least of their maintenance. They could have drawn a certain sum out of your poors'-fund. But no, they would not. Before they will take this sum, they try what they can do by more work and better management. They will not take a fraction from you, so long as they can shift for themselves. They do as Paul the apostle did before them; they labour with their own hands rather than be burdensome to others; and that sum which they might have gotten, they suffer you to keep entire for the relief of other wants still more urgent, and of other families still more helpless.

Now, the question I have to put to you is—"Who is the giver of this sum?" I may take a list of them. I may put down the names of the original contributors, who made it up by their pennies and their sixpences. But there is one name which does not appear in the catalogue, yet nobler than them all—even the hard-working and the honest-hearted labourer, who might have



obtained the whole sum, but refused to touch a single fraction of it—who shifted it from himself and let it pass unimpaired to the lightening of a burden still heavier than his own—who declined the offer; or to whom the offer was never made, because it was known to all, that his own hands ministered unto his own necessities. He is the giver of this sum. Others may have parted with it out of their abundance. But he has given it out of the sweat of his brow. He has risen up early and sat up late, that he might have it to bestow on a poorer than himself. It was first gotten from the easy liberalities of those who scarcely felt it to be a sacrifice. But it was gotten a second time out of the bones and muscles of a generous workman. I trust there are hundreds of such in this town and neighbourhood. I offer them the homage of my respectful congratulations; nor am I doing them a greater honour, than the sincerity of my admiration goes along with, when I say that they are the best friends of the poor, they are their kindest and most generous benefactors.

But let me go still further down—even to the case of those who are really not able to give; but who, burdened with the infirmities of age or of disease or of sickly and deformed children, have at length given way to the pressure of circumstances, and come under the painful necessity of receiving. They may still carry the same noble principle along with them; and though in outward deed, they are receivers—to them may belong all the generosity of the giver, and all his blessedness. You may not be able so to labour, as not to be burdensome; but all of you are able to do your best—and if you so work and so manage, that you are as little burdensome as you can, your names may be recorded in the book of Heaven among the most benevolent of the species. I love the poor, and I have this very thing to record of them; and I have no doubt that there are some now present, who have witnessed it along with me. Have you never offered any one of them a sum, out of the public charity; and received part of it back again? Our necessities force us to take something; but we shall not take to the whole extent of your offer. We request that you will keep a part, and leave us to make a fend with the remainder. Who, I ask again, has given me the sum that is so returned to me? Who is it that has fed the poor and clothed the naked out of it? To whose account am I to put down this sum, more honourable to him who has given it—than the golden donation to be seen on the forehead of

many a subscription paper? Oh, it is easy for us who sit at our warm firesides, and our plentiful tables, to throw a gift into the treasury, and live as softly and luxuriously as ever; but when a man of poverty submits to voluntary hardships, and fears to be burdensome—he may have a receiving hand but he has a giving heart; and the eye of the great Discerner may there see the sacred principle of charity, in its purest and most heavenly exercise.

Now, it is not necessary to make the supposition of so much money being offered, and a part of it being given back again by each individual in these circumstances. Enough that the individual, by his labour and his frugality and his honest wish to serve others, makes a less sum necessary to be offered than would otherwise have been sufficient for him. I trust that there are many such individuals; and be assured that though they get out of the parish fund, though they get out of the produce of your society, though they get out of the liberality of their wealthier acquaintances, though to the outward and undiscerning eye of the world they are one and all of them receivers—in the sight of that high and heavenly Witness who pondereth the heart of man, they are givers—they are put down as givers in the book of His remembrance—and, if what they do and suffer in this way be done unto Jesus and suffered for His sake—to them will be assigned all the blessedness of givers in the day of reckoning.

The duty which I am now pressing upon the poor of being as little burdensome as they can, is the very lesson to be drawn from the passage now before us. On what occasion is it that Paul says in my text—"It is more blessed to give than to receive"? It is true that he gave the people of Ephesus Christian instruction, he ministered to them in spiritual things; but he is speaking of the way in which he obtained a temporal subsistence for himself and for his companions. In reference to meat and to clothing he did not give to the Ephesians; but he wrought for it to himself and his own company, and it was doing this which brought down upon him the blessedness of giving. Think not then, my brethren, that your poverty shuts you out from the same reward. Though you do not give with the hand, you may earn the blessedness of giving that Paul earned; and you may do it in the very same way that he did. You may covet no man's silver or gold or apparel; and, in as far as age or disease or the pressure of a numerous and sickly offspring will

let you, you may say with the apostle "Yea, you yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that are with me."

In this age of benevolent exertion, it is delightful to see the number of societies, and the ready encouragement which comes in upon them from the liberality of the public—an encouragement which I trust will never be withdrawn, till Bibles are circulated through all countries, and till missionaries have planted in every land the faith of a crucified Saviour. But while witnessing the splendid names, and the princely donations which appear in the printed lists of these societies, I cannot forbear the reflection that there are many others whose labour of love is unnoticed and unrecorded, who will be registered in the book of heaven as fellow-helpers to the cause. There are poor who cannot afford to give; but who, struggling manfully with the necessity of their circumstances, keep themselves from being burdensome to others—and God, who judgeth righteously, will put down in part to their account, the sum which they have suffered to go untouched and unencroached upon to the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. There are others who cannot afford to give; but who strive to the uttermost—and, by dint of sobriety and of frugal management, reduce the supply of charity to a sum as small as possible. God will not treat them as receivers. He will put down to their account all that they have saved to the givers; and He will say, that by the whole amount of what is thus saved, they have fed the stream of that benevolence which is directed to other objects. The contributors whose names are presented every year to the eye of the public, are not the only contributors to our Bible and Missionary Societies. I could tell you of more; and though I cannot point my finger to those of them who occupy this town and neighbourhood, I am sure that many of my hearers can do it for me. There is the industrious labourer, who nobly clears his way among all the difficulties which surround him. There is the frugal housewife, who lends her important share to the interests of the young family. There is the servant who ministers out of her own wages—to those parents whom age has bowed down in helpless dependence upon the gratitude of their offspring. In the eye of the world they may not have given a penny to the cause; but, substantially and in effect, they have supported it. They have circulated Bibles; they have sent forth missionaries; through them the stream of Christian light has been poured

more copiously on the wilds of paganism ; and many a converted Indian who meets them in heaven, will bear them witness that they have added to the number of the redeemed by giving the message of peace a speedier circulation.

I now conclude, and I do it with one observation. Ask the giver if he would not feel more disposed to be liberal, and to open a wider hand to the distresses of those around him, were he assured that all he gave went to the alleviation of real distress. It is the experience of imposition which shuts many a heart—and this is a lesson both to the receivers and the visitors of this Society. How much is it in the power of the lower classes to befriend their poorer brethren, by the rigid observance of the duty I have now been pressing upon them. They would bring down upon them an aid and a sympathy from the rich, which they have never yet experienced. The counterfeit and the worthless poor do a world of mischief to the cause of beneficence. They obtain for themselves that which the unfortunate and deserving poor should have gotten. And, what is still more than this, they stifle in the hearts of the rich, those emotions of sympathy which would otherwise have kindled in them. They throw the cold damp of suspicion over their charities. The money which would have circulated as freely as the light of day among the habitations of the wretched is detained, as by an iron grasp, in the hands of men who have at one time been misled by the dissimulations of the poor, and at another provoked by their ingratitude. Ye amiable and humane visitors of this Society, it lies upon you to remedy this evil. Convince the givers around you of the judicious application of the money in your hands ; and more will flow in upon you. Be vigilant, be discerning, be impartial. Your judgment most be brought into action, as well as your sympathy. There is as much of the coolness of principle as of the high ecstasy of feeling in the benevolence of a Christian ; and my prayer is, that the kind office you are engaged in may be blessed to your own souls—that a single aim to the glory of God may animate all your exertions—that the glittering parade of ostentation may not deceive you—that, instead of seeking the honour which cometh from one another, you may seek the honour that cometh from God only—that the tenderness you feel for others, may be the genuine fruit of that Spirit which is given to them who believe—that the labour you have undertaken may indeed be undertaken in the Lord—and then, I can assure you, it will not be in

vain; and I call upon you to be steadfast and immovable, and always abounding therein.

To conclude. It is our duty to relieve actual suffering in all its forms; and, be it ignorance or disease or age or lunacy or hunger or nakedness, the claim upon our beneficence is made out in one and all of these cases, if it just be made out that they exist—and with the same tone of earnestness by which I call upon you to instruct the ignorant, and to harbour the deranged, and to minister to the diseased, do I call upon you to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked, and to give of your abundance to him who is in need. There is no difference among all these cases in the obligation to grant relief; and the only difference I ever contended for, is in the way of going about it. Do the thing in such a way as shall relieve the present case; and do not the thing in such a way as shall have the effect of multiplying the future cases. Now you do not multiply the future cases of disease or derangement or dumbness or blindness, by giving the utmost publicity to your plans for relieving them, by pleading for them from the pulpit, by building hospitals and asylums, and blazoning the names and the payments of subscribers in the columns of a newspaper. But you do multiply the future cases of indigence by all this noise and all this parading, about a plan or a society which has for its object the general relief of indigence. And the plain cause of the difference between the former and the latter is, that a man almost never becomes a voluntary object for the charity of an hospital; but he may, and in point of fact he often does, become a voluntary object for the charity of alms: and therefore it is, that the less he knows about the existence of the last kind of charity the better; and a want of attention to this principle is, I am sorry to say, ripening or preparing the population of our great towns, for that system which now obtains with such full and mischievous operation in England—and that delicacy to keep alive which Paul gave up a portion of his apostolical labours, a minister now-a-days is called upon also to leave his parish duties, but for the very different purpose of breaking it down: and thus it is that, under the soft guise of humanity, a system may be instituted, which, with kindness for its principle, may carry cruelty in its operation—ay, and when the yearly assessment comes to be established, and the provision of a mistaken benevolence is made known, and the poor have found their way to it—they will set in upon you by thousands; and the money which is

withheld from the endowment of more schools and more churches and more ministers to meet the moral and religious wants of an increasing population—will be as nothing to the hungry and unquenchable demands of a people, whom you have seduced from that principle of independence which Christianity teaches, and which the despised exertions of the Christian minister alone can keep alive.

And is the cause of indigence then to be altogether abandoned? This does not follow. The duty of relieving want is unquestionable, but there is a way of going about it; and while I honestly wish it were carried to a tenfold greater extent than it is at this moment—all I contend for is, that it shall be invested with the good old scriptural attribute of secrecy. Let societies be multiplied and pleaded for and publicly made known for the improvement of the mind, and the relief of every one species of involuntary suffering—but do let the relief of want be more confided than it is, to the discernment and discretion and active benevolence of individuals. It is my earnest desire that every man among you were a Cornelius, and every woman among you were a Dorcas—but I should like the alms of the one unseen by human eye to ascend as a memorial before God; and the making of coats and garments by the other to remain unknown till the hand of death shall discover it. Were every individual among you to give up one-tenth of his income to the comfort of those in your neighbourhood, I am sure I should be among the first to rejoice; but let each of you give one-hundredth of his income to some published and proclaimed charity for bread to the hungry and clothing to the naked; and a fearful suspicion of the consequences would chill my every feeling of benevolent approbation. It is true that concert carries an advantage along with it; but is not concert consistent with secrecy? Is it necessary that the trumpet be sounded upon the subject, either in the pulpit or out of it? Would not the gradual abolition of the public charities—for like the abolition of every established mischief I fear it must be gradual—give an impulse to individual benevolence to replace the want of them? and, after almsgiving had taken this salutary direction, are there not Christians to be found in every street, who, unknowing and unknown to all but themselves, could meet together in the name of Christ; and, under the eye of their heavenly Witness, could give their attention and their charity and their wisdom to that work and labour of love which He has assigned to them?

I feel myself oppressed by the want of time and of space, for I am aware of many questions which I must leave unresolved behind me; but there is one which I cannot pass over. Does a published and proclaimed plan for the relief of orphans come under the animadversions which I have felt it my duty to advance, against any such plan for the relief of indigence in general? O no, my brethren. A public charity for the relief of general indigence may tempt many a father to the relaxation of his industry, and many a mother to the relaxation of her management; but a charity for the relief of orphans will neither tempt the one nor the other to a voluntary martyrdom. Carry the former system to a certain extent; and you will witness many a parent providing not for those of his own house; but carry the latter system to the full extent of its object, and you never can have such a spectacle as this to freeze and to discourage you. In the one case, many of the children you feed and you educate, may be devolved upon you by the wilful negligence of a parent. In the other case, they are devolved upon you by the will of God. He has called away the parents to another scene; and He has left to you the care of their helpless family. If you are officious enough to do that which is more the duty of another, you may have performed his work; but by tempting him to a dereliction of his principles, you have done it at the expense of his soul. This language is surely not too strong, if by your injudicious charity you have made a single parent let down the industriousness of his habits—for by so doing you have made him worse than an infidel. But such is the wisdom of the object to which you have attached yourselves, that though you do all which you propose—you interfere with no man's duty; you tempt and you corrupt no parents, for alas, where are they?—you stifle no one feeling of parental tenderness, for this is what the cold hand of death hath already done—you withdraw no children from father's or mother's care, for fathers and mothers are by the mysterious Providence of God withdrawn from them: and that duty which at one time belonged to another, has become singly and entirely yours. O how I rejoice, when the lessons of wisdom are at one with the best and the most delightful of our sympathies—when compassion may give full vent to its tenderness, and no one principle or maxim of prudence is trenched upon—when the sweet movements of pity may be cherished and indulged to the uttermost, and truth brings no one severity to scowl upon us, or tell us with stern authoritative voice that we expatiate on a forbidden

territory. Keep by your professed object, my brethren; and if you do so, let your liberality know no other limit, than that the object be provided for. And let me not dismiss you without at least an observation, which I pray God may bless by the enlightening influences of His Spirit, so as to undeceive many who build their confidence upon their charities. A man, under the impulse of natural feeling, may do many a deed of tenderness; and yet may have a mind totally unfurnished with a sense of God, and a life totally polluted by conformity to the world. It is well that God has provided society with so many natural securities for its existence, in the constitution of the members who compose it—just as it is well for the preservation of the other tribes of animals, that He has endowed them with the instinct of affection for their young. But ever remember that feeling is one thing and principle is another; and to give the stamp of religion to your doings, a sense of God and of His will must mingle and give the tone and the direction to every one of them. And thus while it is true that part of pure religion and undefiled is to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, it is only when this is done with a reference of the heart to God and the Father. And yet how many, because endowed with the constitutional tenderness, think that upon this single peculiarity, they may walk in the sight of their own eyes here, and be translated with all the waywardness of a heart alienated from God and devoted with every one of its affections to the creature, to the joys and the rewards of an unfading hereafter: And therefore it is, that I call upon you not to put asunder what God has joined—not to found your confidence upon a single half-text of a record, which, in the vast majority of its contents, you despise and put away from you—not to open your eye to one clause of a verse, and shut your eye to the other clause of it; but know that pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep yourselves unspotted from the world.

I have hitherto confined myself to general principles; but let me not forget the claims of that Institution which I have been appointed to advocate before you. Nor have I forgotten them. In this age of benevolent institutions, when some of them are so legalized by the strong hand of authority, and some of them are so paraded before the eyes of the public, as to be counted upon by the receiver; as to tempt him from the virtue of the text; as to relax his economical habits, and of course to create



and to multiply more cases of distress than it is in the power of all human contrivances ever to provide for—I say, in these circumstances, one feels a comfort in attaching himself to the cause of an endowment, which may be supported to any extent you please, without its ever being possible to realize the mischief I am now alluding to. Why, my brethren—the very confinement of the object to a limited number of families, is of itself a security against that mischief which our soundest economists apprehend from the number and the publicity of our benevolent institutions. Were the country, upon the spontaneous movement of its own kindly and religious feelings, to take upon itself the care of our destitute orphans, it just resolves itself into an augmentation of the clerical patrimony. It is only adding a little to the provision of the Legislature in our behalf; and it is such an addition as will not give one single luxury to our table, or tempt us to the pride of life by enabling us to tack one vanity more to the splendour of our establishment. I am not aware of a single hurtful effect that can be alleged against the charity for which I am contending. I know of nothing that should throw the cold damp of suspicion over it—and therefore it is that I feel no restraint whatever, in laying it before you as an open field, on which the benevolence of the public may expatiate without fear and without encumbrance. It is true that the sympathies of a man are ever most alive to those distresses which may fall upon himself—and that it is for a minister to feel the deepest emotion at the sad picture of the breaking up of a minister's family. When the sons and the daughters of clergymen are left to go, they know not whither, from the peacefulness of their father's dwelling—never were poor outcasts less prepared by the education and the habits of former years, for the scowl of an un-pitying world; nor can I figure a drearier and more affecting contrast, than that which obtains between the blissful security of their earlier days, and the dark and unshielded condition to which the hand of Providence has now brought them. It is not necessary, for the purpose of awakening your sensibilities on this subject, to dwell upon every one circumstance of distress which enters into the sufferings of this bereaved family—or to tell you of the many friends they must abandon, and the many charms of that peaceful neighbourhood which they must quit for ever. But when they look abroad and survey the innumerable beauties which the God of nature has scattered so profusely around them—when they see the sun throwing its unclouded splendours over the whole neighbourhood—when, on the fair side of the year,

they behold the smiling aspect of the country; and at every footstep they take, some flower appears in its loveliness, or some bird offers its melody to delight them—when they see quietness on all the hills, and every field glowing in the pride and luxury of vegetation—when they see summer throwing its rich garment over this goodly scene of magnificence and glory, and think, in the bitterness of their souls, that this is the last summer which they shall ever witness smiling on that scene which all the ties of habit and of affection have endeared to them—when this thought, melancholy as it is, is lost and overborne in the far darker melancholy of a father torn from their embrace, and a helpless family left to find their way unprotected and alone through the lowering futurity of this earthly pilgrimage—Do you wonder that their feeling hearts should be ready to lose hold of the promise, that He who decks the lily fair in flowery pride, will guide them in safety through the world, and at last raise all who believe in Him to the bloom and the vigour of immortality? The flowers of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin, yet your heavenly Father careth for them—and how much more careth He for you, O ye of little faith?

Oh, it is kind in you, my brethren, to set yourselves forward as the instruments of this promise—to house these unprotected wanderers—to shield them from the blast they are far too soft and tender to endure—and to lighten the severity of that fall which they have suffered, by the premature loss of a father, who now only lives in the memory of a revering people, and the affections of a despairing family. Do, my brethren, give out of your abundance. You know not what the hand of death may ere long bring upon your own habitations. Work then while it is day; for the night cometh when no man can work. If the Discerner of the heart, who counts even a cup of cold water given to the least of His little ones, sees of your offering that it is done unto Him, and that it is for the love you bear His gospel, and the value you have for His ministers—if He can recognise it as the fruit of that mighty principle which purifies the heart, and sends forth the copious streams of all that is good and kind and generous into the walk and conversation, then verily I say unto you that you shall by no means lose your reward.\*

\* The three different conclusions of this sermon mark the three different occasions on which it was preached; and also the sentiments of the author, in regard to the distinct objects which he was called upon to advocate. He may remark, that, after the experience of twenty-four years, he should feel disinclined to plead for the first of these objects, and even be doubtful in regard to the second—which he thinks occupies a midway or ambiguous place between the cases which might, and those which ought not to be provided for by public institutions.

## SERMON V.

*(Preached in the Tron Church, Glasgow, on a day of National Thanksgiving in 1816.)*

## THOUGHTS ON UNIVERSAL PEACE.

“Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”—  
ISAIAH ii. 4.

THERE are a great many passages in Scripture which warrant the expectation that a time is coming, when war shall be put an end to—when its abominations and its cruelties shall be banished from the face of the earth—when those restless elements of ambition and jealousy which have so long kept the species in a state of unceasing commotion, and are ever and anon sending another and another wave over the field of this world’s politics, shall at length be hushed into a placid and enduring calm; and many and delightful are the images which the Bible employs, as, guided by the light of prophecy, it carries us forward to those millennial days when the reign of peace shall be established, and the wide charity of the gospel, which is confined by no limits and owns no distinctions, shall embosom the whole human race within the ample grasp of one harmonious and universal family.

But before I proceed, let me attempt to do away a delusion which exists on the subject of prophecy. Its fulfilments are all certain, say many, and we have therefore nothing to do but to wait for them in passive and indolent expectation. The truth of God stands in no dependence on human aid to vindicate the immutability of all His announcements; and the power of God stands in no need of the feeble exertions of man to hasten the accomplishment of any of His purposes. Let us therefore sit down quietly in the attitude of spectators—let us leave the Divinity to do His own work in His own way, and mark, by the progress of a history over which we have no control, the evolution of His designs, and the march of His wise and beneficent administration.

Now, it is very true, that the Divinity will do His own work in His own way, but if He choose to tell us that that way is not without the instrumentality of men, but by their instrumentality, might not this sitting down into the mere attitude of spectators turn out to be a most perverse and disobedient conclusion? It is true that His purpose will obtain its fulfilment, whether we shall offer or not to help it forward by our co-operation. But if the object is to be brought about, and if, in virtue of the same sovereignty by which He determined upon the object, He has also determined on the way which leads to it, and that that way shall be by the acting of human principle, and the putting forth of human exertion, then let us keep back our co-operation as we may, God will raise up the hearts of others to that which we abstain from; and they, admitted into the high honour of being fellow-workers with God, may do homage to the truth of His prophecy; while we, perhaps, may unconsciously do dreadful homage to the truth of another warning and another prophecy: "I work a work in your days which you shall not believe, though a man declare it unto you. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!"

Now this is the very way in which prophecies have been actually fulfilled. The return of the people of Israel to their own land was an event predicted by inspiration, and was brought about by the stirring up of the spirit of Cyrus, who felt himself charged with the duty of building a house to God at Jerusalem. The pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was foretold by the Saviour ere He left the world, and was accomplished upon men, who assembled themselves together at the place to which they were commanded to repair; and there they waited, and there they prayed. The rapid propagation of Christianity in those days was known, by the human agents of this propagation, to be made sure by the word of prophecy; but the way in which it was actually made sure was by the strenuous exertions, the unexampled heroism, the holy devotedness and zeal, of martyrs and apostles and evangelists. And even now, my brethren, while no professing Christians can deny that their faith is to be one day the faith of all countries; but while many of them idly sit, and wait the time of God putting forth some mysterious and unheard-of agency, to bring about the universal diffusion, there are men who have betaken themselves to the obvious expedient of going abroad among the nations and teaching them; and though derided by an undiscerning world, they seem to be

the very men pointed out by the Bible, who are going to and fro increasing the knowledge of its doctrines, and who will be the honoured instruments of carrying into effect the most splendid of all its anticipations.

Now the same holds true, I apprehend, of the prophecy in my text. The abolition of war will be the effect not of any sudden or resistless visitation from heaven on the character of men—not of any mystical influence working with all the omnipotence of a charm on the passive hearts of those who are the subjects of it—not of any blind or overruling fatality which will come upon the earth at some distant period of its history, and about which we of the present day have nothing to do but to look silently on, without concern and without co-operation. The prophecy of a peace as universal as the spread of the human race, and as enduring as the moon in the firmament, will meet its accomplishment, and at that very time which is already fixed by Him who seeth the end of all things from the beginning thereof. But it will be brought about by the activity of men. It will be done by the philanthropy of thinking and intelligent Christians. The conversion of the Jews—the spread of gospel light among the regions of idolatry—these are distinct subjects of prophecy, on which the faithful of the land are now acting, and to the fulfilment of which they are giving their zeal and their energy. I conceive the prophecy which relates to the final abolition of war will be taken up in the same manner; and the subject will be brought to the test of Christian principle; and many will unite to spread a growing sense of its follies and its enormities over the countries of the world—and the public will be enlightened not by the factious and turbulent declamations of a party, but by the mild dissemination of gospel sentiment through the land—and the prophecy contained in this book will pass into effect and accomplishment, by no other influence than the influence of its ordinary lessons on the hearts and consciences of individuals—and the measure will first be carried in one country, not by the unhallowed violence of discontent, but by the control of general opinion, expressed on the part of a people, who, if Christian in their repugnance to war, will be equally Christian in all the loyalties and subjections, and meek unresisting virtues of the New Testament—and the sacred fire of good-will to the children of men will spread itself through all climes, and through all latitudes—and thus by scriptural truth conveyed with power from one people to another, and taking its ample round among

all the tribes and families of the earth, shall we arrive at the magnificent result of peace throughout all its provinces, and security in all its dwelling-places.

In the further prosecution of this discourse, I shall, first, expatiate a little on the evils of war. In the second place, I shall direct your attention to the obstacles which stand in the way of its extinction, and which threaten to retard for a time the accomplishment of the prophecy I have now selected for your consideration. And, in the third place, I shall endeavour to point out, what can only be done at present in a hurried and superficial manner, some of the expedients by which these obstacles may be done away.

I.—I shall expatiate a little on the evils of war. The mere existence of the prophecy in my text, is a sentence of condemnation upon war, and stamps a criminality on its very forehead. So soon as Christianity shall gain a full ascendancy in the world, from that moment war is to disappear. We have heard that there is something noble in the art of war; that there is something generous in the ardour of that fine chivalric spirit which kindles in the hour of alarm, and rushes with delight among the thickest scenes of danger and of enterprise;—that man is never more proudly arrayed than when, elevated by a contempt for death, he puts on his intrepid front, and looks serene, while the arrows of destruction are flying on every side of him;—that expunge war, and you expunge some of the brightest names in the catalogue of human virtue, and demolish that theatre on which have been displayed some of the sublimest energies of the human character. It is thus that war has been invested with a most pernicious splendour, and men have offered to justify it as a blessing, and an ornament to society, and attempts have been made to throw a kind of imposing morality around it; and one might almost be reconciled to the whole train of its calamities and its horrors, did he not believe his Bible, and learn from its information, that in the days of perfect righteousness, there will be no war;—that so soon as the character of man has had the last finish of Christian principle thrown over it, from that moment all the instruments of war will be thrown aside, and all its lessons will be forgotten;—that, therefore, what are called the virtues of war are no virtues at all, or that a better and a worthier scene will be provided for their exercise; but in short, that at the commencement of that blissful era when the reign of heaven

shall be established, war will take its departure from the world with all the other plagues and atrocities of the species.

But apart altogether from this testimony to the evil of war, let us just take a direct look of it, and see whether we can find its character engraven on the aspect it bears to the eye of an attentive observer. The stoutest heart of this assembly would recoil, were he who owns it to behold the destruction of a single individual by some deed of violence. Were the man who at this moment stands before you in the full play and energy of health, to be in another moment laid by some deadly aim a lifeless corpse at your feet, there is not one of you who would not prove how strong are the relentings of nature at a spectacle so hideous as death. There are some of you who would be haunted for whole days by the image of horror you had witnessed—who would feel the weight of a most oppressive sensation upon your heart, which nothing but time could wear away—who would be so pursued by it as to be unfit for business or for enjoyment—who would think of it through the day, and it would spread a gloomy disquietude over your waking moments—who would dream of it at night, and it would turn that bed which you courted as a retreat from the torments of an ever-meddling memory, into a scene of restlessness.

But generally the death of violence is not instantaneous, and there is often a sad and dreary interval between its final consummation, and the infliction of the blow which causes it. The winged messenger of destruction has not found its direct avenue to that spot where the principle of life is situated—and the soul, finding obstacles to its immediate egress, has to struggle for hours ere it can make its weary way through the winding avenues of that tenement, which has been torn open by a brother's hand. Oh, my brethren, if there be something appalling in the suddenness of death, think not that when gradual in its advances, you will alleviate the horrors of this sickening contemplation by viewing it in a milder form. Oh, tell me, if there be any relentings of pity in your bosom, how could you endure it, to behold the agonies of the dying man, as, goaded by pain, he grasps the cold ground in convulsive energy, or faint with the loss of blood, his pulse ebbs low, and the gathering paleness spreads itself over his countenance—or wrapping himself round in despair, he can only mark by a few feeble quiverings that life still lurks and lingers in his lacerated body—or lifting up a faded eye, he cast on you a look of imploring helplessness for

that succour which no sympathy can yield him. It may be painful to dwell on such a representation—but this is the way in which the cause of humanity is served. The eye of the sentimentalist turns away from its sufferings; and he passes by on the other side, lest he hear that pleading voice which is armed with a tone of remonstrance so vigorous as to disturb him. He cannot bear thus to pause, in imagination, on the distressing picture of one individual; but multiply it ten thousand times—say, how much of all this distress has been heaped together upon a single field—give us the arithmetic of this accumulated wretchedness, and lay it before us with all the accuracy of an official computation—and, strange to tell, not one sigh is lifted up among the crowd of eager listeners as they stand on tiptoe, and catch every syllable of utterance which is read to them out of the registers of death. O say, what mystic spell is that which so blinds us to the sufferings of our brethren—which deafens to our ear the voice of bleeding humanity, when it is aggravated by the shriek of dying thousands—which makes the very magnitude of the slaughter throw a softening disguise over its cruelties and its horrors—which causes us to eye with indifference the field that is crowded with the most revolting abominations, and arrests that sigh which each individual would singly have drawn from us, by the report of the many who have fallen, and breathed their last in agony along with him?

I am not saying that the burden of all this criminality rests upon the head of the immediate combatants. It lies somewhere; but who can deny that a soldier may be a Christian, and that from the bloody field on which his body is laid, his soul may wing its ascending way to the shores of a peaceful eternity? But when I think that the Christians, even of the great world, form but a very little flock, and that an army is not a propitious soil for the growth of Christian principle—when I think on the character of one such army, that had been led on for years by a ruffian ambition—and been inured to scenes of barbarity—and had gathered a most ferocious hardihood of soul, from the many enterprises of violence to which an unprincipled commander had carried them—when I follow them to the field of battle, and further think, that on both sides of an exasperated contest—the gentleness of Christianity can have no place in almost any bosom; but that nearly every heart is lighted up with fury, and breathes a vindictive purpose against a brother of the species, I cannot but reckon it among the most fearful of the



calamities of war—that while the work of death is thickening along its ranks, so many disembodied spirits should pass into the presence of Him who sitteth upon the throne, in such a posture, and with such a preparation.

I have no time, and assuredly as little taste, for expatiating on a topic so melancholy, nor can I afford at present to set before you a vivid picture of the other miseries which war carries in its train—how it desolates every country through which it rolls, and spreads violation and alarm among its villages—how, at its approach, every home pours forth its trembling fugitives—how all the rights of property, and all the provisions of justice, must give way before its devouring exactions—how, when Sabbath comes, no Sabbath charm comes along with it—and for the sound of the church bell, which wont to spread its music over some fine landscape of nature, and summon rustic worshippers to the house of prayer—nothing is heard but the deathful volleys of the battle, and the maddening outcry of infuriated men—how, as the fruit of victory, an unprincipled licentiousness whith no discipline can restrain, is suffered to walk at large among the people—and all that is pure, and reverent, and holy in the virtue of families, is cruelly trampled on, and held in the bitterest derision. Oh! my brethren, were we to pursue those details, which no pen ever attempts, and no chronicle perpetuates, we should be tempted to ask, what that is which civilisation has done for the character of the species? It has thrown a few paltry embellishments over the surface of human affairs; and, for the order of society, it has reared the defences of law around the rights and the property of the individuals who compose it. But let war, legalized as you may, and ushered into the field with all the parade of forms and manifestoes—let this war only have its season, and be suffered to overleap these artificial defences, and you will soon see how much of the security of the commonwealth is due to positive restrictions, and how little of it is due to a natural sense of justice among men. I know well, that the plausibilities of human character, which abound in every modern and enlightened society, have been mustered up to oppose the doctrine of the Bible, on the woful depravity of our race. But out of the history of war, I can gather for this doctrine the evidence of experiment. It tells me, that man, when left to himself and let loose among his fellows, to walk after the counsel of his own heart, and in the sight of his own eyes, will soon discover how

thin that tinsel is, which the boasted hand of civilisation has thrown over him.—And we have only to blow the trumpet of war, and proclaim to man the hour of his opportunity, that his character may show itself in its essential elements—and that we may see how many, in this our moral and enlightened day, would spring forward as to a jubilee of delight, and prowl like the wild men of the woods, amidst scenes of rapacity and cruelty and violence.

II.—But let me hasten away from this part of the subject; and, in the second place, direct your attention to those obstacles which stand in the way of the extinction of war, and which threaten to retard, for a time, the accomplishment of the prophecy I have now selected for your consideration.

But is this the time, it may be asked, to complain of obstacles to the extinction of war, when peace has been given to the nations, and we are assembled to celebrate its triumphs? Is this day of high and solemn gratulation to be turned to such forebodings as these? The whole of Europe is now at rest from the tempest which convulsed it—and a solemn treaty, with all its adjustments and all its guarantees, promises a firm perpetuity to the repose of the world. We have long fought for a happier order of things, and at length we have established it—and the hard-earned bequest we hand down to posterity as a rich inheritance, won by the labours and the sufferings of the present generation. That gigantic ambition which stalked in triumph over the firmest and the oldest of our monarchies, is now laid—and can never again burst forth from the confinement of its prison-hold to waken a new uproar, and send forth new troubles over the face of a desolated world.

Now, in reply to this, let it be observed, that every interval of repose is precious—every breathing-time from the work of violence is to be rejoiced in by the friends of humanity—every agreement among the powers of the earth, by which a temporary respite can be gotten from the calamities of war, is so much reclaimed from the amount of those miseries that afflict the world, and of those crimes, the cry of which ascendeth unto heaven, and bringeth down the judgments of God on this dark and rebellious province of His creation. I trust, that on this day, gratitude to Him who alone can still the tumults of the people, will be the sentiment of every heart—and I trust that none who now hear me, will refuse to evince his gratitude to the Author of the New Testament, by their obedience to one of the most

distinct and undoubted of its lessons—I mean the lesson of a reverential and submissive loyalty. I cannot pass an impartial eye over this record of God's will, without perceiving the utter repugnance that there is between the spirit of Christianity, and the factious, turbulent, unquenchable, and ever-meddling spirit of political disaffection. I will not compromise, by the surrender of a single jot or tittle, the integrity of that preceptive code which the Saviour hath left behind Him for the obedience of His disciples. I will not detach the very minutest of its features from the fine picture of morality that Christ hath bequeathed, both by commandment and example, to adorn the nature He condescended to wear—and sure I am that the man who has drunk in the entire spirit of the gospel—who, reposing himself on the faith of its promised immortality, can maintain an elevated calm amid all the fluctuations of this world's interest—whose exclusive ambition it is to be the unexcepted pupil of pure and spiritual and self-denying Christianity—sure I am that such a man will honour the king and all who are in authority—and be subject unto them for the sake of conscience—and render unto them all their dues—and not withhold a single fraction of the tribute they impose upon him—and be the best of subjects, just because he is the best of Christians—resisting none of the ordinances of God, and living a quiet and a peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.

But it gives me pleasure to advance a further testimony in behalf of that government with which it has pleased God, who appointeth to all men the bounds of their habitation, to bless that portion of the globe which we occupy. I count it such a government that I not only owe it the loyalty of my principles—but I also owe it the loyalty of my affections. I could not lightly part with my devotion to that government which the other year opened the door to the Christianization of India—I shall never withhold the tribute of my reverence from that government which put an end to the atrocities of the Slave Trade—I shall never forget the triumph which, in that proudest day of Britain's story, the cause of humanity gained within the walls of our enlightened Parliament. Let my right hand forget her cunning, ere I forget that country of my birth, where, in defiance to all the clamours of mercantile alarm, every calculation of interest was given to the wind, and braving every hazard, she nobly resolved to shake off the whole burden of the infamy which lay upon her. I shall never forget, that how

to complete the object in behalf of which she has so honourably led the way, she has walked the whole round of civilized society, and knocked at the door of every government in Europe, and lifted her imploring voice for injured Africa, and pleaded with the mightiest monarchs of the world, the cause of her outraged shores, and her distracted families. I can neither shut my heart nor my eyes to the fact, that at this moment she is stretching forth the protection of her naval arm, and shielding to the uttermost of her vigour, that coast where an inhuman avarice is still plying its guilty devices, and aiming to perpetuate among an unoffending people, a trade of cruelty, with all the horrid train of its terrors and abominations. Were such a government as this to be swept from its base, either by the violence of foreign hostility, or by the hands of her own misled and infatuated children—I should never cease to deplore it as the deadliest interruption which ever had been given to the interests of human virtue, and to the march of human improvement. O how it should swell every heart, not with pride, but with gratitude, to think that the land of our fathers, with all the iniquities which abound in it, with all the profligacy which spreads along our streets, and all the profaneness that is heard among our companies—to think that this our land, overspread as it is with the appalling characters of guilt, is still the securest asylum of worth and of liberty—that this is the land from which the most copious emanations of Christianity are going forth to all the quarters of the world—that this is the land which teems from one end to the other of it with the most splendid designs and enterprises for the good of the species—that this is the land where public principle is most felt, and public objects are most prosecuted, and the fine impulse of a public spirit is most ready to carry its generous people beyond the limits of a selfish and contracted patriotism! Yes, and when the heart of the philanthropist is sinking within him at the gloomy spectacle of those crimes and atrocities which still deform the history of man, I know not a single earthly expedient more fitted to brighten and sustain him, than to turn his eye to the country in which he lives—and there see the most enlightened government in the world acting as the organ of its most moral and intelligent population.

It is not against the government of my country, therefore, that I direct my observations—but against that nature of man in the infirmities of which we all share, and the evil of which

no government can extinguish. We have carried a new political arrangement, and we experience as the result of it, a temporary calm—but we have not yet carried our way to the citadel of human passions. The elements of war are hushed for a season—but these elements are not destroyed. They still rankle in many an unsubdued heart—and I am too well taught by the history of the past, and the experience of its restless variations, not to believe that they will burst forth again in thunder over the face of society. No, my brethren, it will only be when diffused and vital Christianity comes upon the earth, that an enduring peace will come along with it. The prophecy of my text will obtain its fulfilment—but not till the fulfilment of the verses which go before it;—not till the influence of the gospel has found its way to the human bosom, and plucked out of it the elementary principles of war;—not till the law of love shall spread its melting and all-subduing efficacy among the children of one common nature;—not till ambition be dethroned from its mastery over the affections of the inner man;—not till the guilty splendours of war shall cease to captivate its admirers, and spread the blaze of a deceitful heroism over the wholesale butchery of the species;—not till national pride be humbled, and man shall learn, that if it be individually the duty of each of us in honour to prefer one another; then let these individuals combine as they may, and form societies as numerous and extensive as they may, and each of these be swelled out to the dimensions of an empire, still, that mutual condescension and forbearance remain the unalterable Christian duties of these empires to each other;—not till man learn to revere his brother as man, whatever portion of the globe he occupies, and all the jealousies and preferences of a contracted patriotism be given to the wind;—not till war shall cease to be prosecuted as a trade, and the charm of all that interest which is linked with its continuance, shall cease to beguile men in the peaceful walks of merchandise, into a barbarous longing after war;—not, in one word, till pride, and jealousy, and interest, and all that is opposite to the law of God and the charity of the gospel, shall be for ever eradicated from the character of those who possess an effectual control over the public and political movements of the species;—Not till all this be brought about; and there is not another agent in the whole compass of nature that can bring it about but the gospel of Christ, carried home by the all-subduing power of the Spirit to the consciences of men;—then,

and not till then, my brethren, will peace come to take up its perennial abode with us, and its blessed advent on earth be hailed by one shout of joyful acclamation throughout all its families ;—then, and not till then, will the sacred principle of good-will to men circulate as free as the air of heaven among all countries—and the sun looking out from the firmament, will behold one fine aspect of harmony throughout the wide extent of a regenerated world.

It will only be in the last days, “when it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it : and many people shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem ; and he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people ;”—then, and not till then, “they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

The above rapid sketch glances at the chief obstacles to the extinction of war ; and, in what remains of this discourse, I shall dwell a little more particularly on as many of them as my time will allow me, finding it impossible to exhaust so wide a topic, within the limits of the public services of one day.

The first great obstacle, then, to the extinction of war, is the way in which the heart of man is carried off from its barbarities and its horrors, by the splendour of its deceitful accompaniments. There is a feeling of the sublime in contemplating the shock of armies, just as there is in contemplating the devouring energy of a tempest ; and this so elevates and engrosses the whole man, that his eye is blind to the tears of bereaved parents, and his ear is deaf to the piteous moan of the dying, and the shriek of their desolated families. There is a gracefulness in the picture of a youthful warrior burning for distinction on the field, and lured by this generous aspiration to the deepest of the animated throng, where, in the fell work of death, the opposing sons of valour struggle for a remembrance and a name ;—and this side of the picture is so much the exclusive object of our regard, as to disguise from our view the mangled carcasses of the fallen, and the writhing agonies of the hundreds and the hundreds more who

have been laid on the cold ground, where they are left to languish and to die. There no eye pities them. No sister is there to weep over them. There no gentle hand is present to ease the dying posture, or bind up the wounds, which, in the maddening fury of the combat, have been given and received by the children of one common Father. Their death spreads its pale ensigns over every countenance; and when night comes on, and darkens around them, how many a despairing wretch must take up with the bloody field as the untended bed of his last sufferings, without one friend to bear the message of tenderness to his distant home, without one companion to close his eyes!

I avow it. On every side of me I see causes at work which go to spread a most delusive colouring over war, and to remove its shocking barbarities to the background of our contemplations altogether. I see it in the history which tells me of the superb appearance of the troops, and the brilliancy of their successive charges. I see it in the poetry which lends the magic of its numbers to the narrative of blood, and transports its many admirers, as by its images, and its figures, and its nodding plumes of chivalry, it throws its treacherous embellishments over a scene of legalized slaughter. I see it in the music which represents the progress of the battle;—and where, after being inspired by the trumpet-notes of preparation, the whole beauty and tenderness of a drawing-room are seen to bend over the sentimental entertainment; nor do I hear the utterance of a single sigh to interrupt the death-tones of the thickening contest, and the moans of the wounded men as they fade away upon the ear, and sink into lifeless silence. All, all goes to prove what strange and half-sighted creatures we are. Were it not so, war could never have been seen in any other aspect than that of unmingled hatefulness; and I can look to nothing but to the progress of Christian sentiment upon earth, to arrest the strong current of its popular and prevailing partiality for war. Then only will an imperious sense of duty lay the check of severe principle on all the subordinate tastes and faculties of our nature. Then will glory be reduced to its right estimate—and the wakeful benevolence of the gospel chasing away every spell, will be turned by the treachery of no delusion whatever, from its simple but sublime enterprises for the good of the species. Then the reign of truth and quietness will be ushered into the world, and war, cruel, atrocious, unrelenting war, will be stript of its many and its bewildering fascinations.

But again, another obstacle to the extinction of war, is a sentiment which seems to be universally gone into, that the rules and promises of the gospel which apply to a single individual, do not apply to a nation of individuals. Just think of the mighty effect it would have on the politics of the world, were this sentiment to be practically deposed from its wonted authority over the counsels and the doings of nations, in their transactions with each other. If forbearance be the virtue of an individual, forbearance is also the virtue of a nation. If it be incumbent on men in honour to prefer each other, it is incumbent on the very largest societies of men, through the constituted organ of their government, to do the same. If it be the glory of a man to defer his anger, and to pass over a transgression, that nation mistakes its glory which is so feelingly alive to the slightest insult, and musters up its threats and its armaments upon the faintest shadow of a provocation. If it be the magnanimity of an injured man to abstain from vengeance, and if by so doing, he heap coals of fire upon the head of his enemy, then that is the magnanimous nation, which, recoiling from violence and from blood, will do no more than send its Christian embassy, and prefer its mild and impressive remonstrance; and that is the disgraced nation which will refuse the impressiveness of the moral appeal that has been made to it.—Oh! my brethren, there must be the breathing of a different spirit to circulate round the globe, ere its Christianized nations resign the jealousies which now front them to each other in the scowling attitude of defiance—and much is to do with the people of every land, ere the prophesied influence of the gospel shall bring its virtuous and its pacifying control to bear with effect on the counsels and governments of the world.

I find that I must be drawing to a close, and that I must forbear entering into several topics on which I meant at one time to expatiate. I wished, in particular, to have laid it fully before you, how the extinction of war, though it should withdraw one of those scenes on which man earns the glory of intrepidity—yet it would leave other, and better, and nobler scenes, for the display and the exercise of this respectable attribute. I wished also to explain to you, that however much I admired the general spirit of Quakerism on the subject of war, yet that I was not prepared to go all the length of its principles, when that war was strictly defensive. It strikes me, that war is to be abolished by the abolition of its aggressive spirit among the different



nations of the world. The text seems to tell me, that this is the order of prophecy upon the subject;—and that it is when nation shall cease to lift up its sword against nation—or in other words, when one nation shall cease to move, for the purpose of attacking another, that military science will be no longer in demand, and that the people of the earth will learn the art of war no more. I should also have stated, that on this ground, I refrained from pronouncing on the justice or necessity of any one war in which this country has ever been involved. I have no doubt, that many of those who supported our former wars, looked on several of them as wars for existence—but on this matter I carefully abstain from the utterance of a single sentiment—for in so doing, I should feel myself to be descending from the generalities of Christian principle, and employing that pulpit as the vehicle of a questionable policy, which ought never to be prostituted either to the unworthy object of sending forth the incense of human flattery to any one administration, or of regaling the factious, and turbulent, and disloyal passions of any party. I should next, if I had had time, offer such observations as were suggested by my own views of political science, on the multitude of vulnerable points by which this country is surrounded, in the shape of numerous and distant dependencies, and which, however much they may tend to foster the warlike politics of our government, are, in truth, so little worth the expense of a war, that should all of them be wrested away from us, they would leave the people of our empire as great and as wealthy, and as competent to every purpose of home security as ever. Lastly, I might have whispered my inclination for a little more of the Chinese policy being imported into Europe, not for the purpose of restraining a liberal intercourse between its different countries, but for the purpose of quieting in each its restless spirit of alarm, about every foreign movement in the politics and designs of other nations; because, sure I am, that were each great empire of the world to lay it down as the maxim of its most scrupulous observance, not to meddle till it was meddled with, each would feel in such a maxim both its safety and its triumph;—for such are the mighty resources of defensive war, that though the whole transportable force of Europe were to land upon our borders, the result of the experiment would be such, that it should never be repeated—the rallying population of Britain could sweep them all from the face of its territory, and a whole myriad of invaders would melt away under the power of such a government as ours,

trenched behind the loyalty of her defenders, and strong, as she deserves to be, in the love and in the confidence of all her children.

I would not have touched on any of the lessons of political economy, did they not lead me, by a single step, to a Christian lesson, which I count it my incumbent duty to press upon the attention of you all. Any sudden change in the state of the demand, must throw the commercial world into a temporary derangement.—And whether the change be from war to peace, or from peace to war, this effect is sure to accompany it. Now for upwards of twenty years, the direction of our trade has been accommodated to a war system; and when this system is put an end to, I do not say what amount of the distress will light upon this neighbourhood, but we may be sure that all the alarm of falling markets, and ruined speculation, will spread an oppressive gloom over many of the manufacturing districts of the land. Now, let my title to address you on other grounds be as questionable as it may, I feel no hesitation whatever in announcing it, as your most imperative duty, that no outcry of impatience or discontent from you shall embarrass the pacific policy of his Majesty's government. They have conferred a great blessing on the country, in conferring on it peace; and it is your part resignedly to weather the languid or disastrous months which may come along with it. The interest of trade is an old argument that has been set up in resistance to the dearest and most substantial interests of humanity. When Paul wanted to bring Christianity into Ephesus, he raised a storm of opposition around him, from a quarter which, I dare say, he was not counting on. There happened to be some shrine manufactories in that place, and as the success of the apostle would infallibly have reduced the demand for that article, forth came the decisive argument of, Sirs, by this craft we have our wealth, and should this Paul turn away the people from the worship of gods made with hands, thereby much damage would accrue to our trade. Why, my brethren, if this argument is to be admitted, there is not one conceivable benefit that can be offered for the acceptance of the species. Would it not be well if all the men of reading in the country were to be diverted from the poison which lurks in many a mischievous publication—and should this blessed reformation be effected, are there none to be found who would feel that much damage had accrued to their trade? Would it not be well if those wretched sons of pleasure, before whom, if they repent not,

there lieth all the dreariness of an unprovided eternity—would it not be well that they were reclaimed from the maddening intoxication which speeds them on in the career of disobedience—and on this event too, would there be none to complain that much damage had accrued to their trade? Is it not well that the infamy of the Slave-trade has been swept from the page of British history? and yet do not many of you remember how long the measure lay suspended, and that about twenty annual flotillas, burdened with the load of human wretchedness, were wafted across the Atlantic, while Parliament was deafened and overborne by unceasing clamours about the much damage that would accrue to the trade? And now, is it not well that peace has once more been given to the nations? and are you to follow up this goodly train of examples, by a single whisper of discontent about the much damage that will accrue to your trade? No, my brethren, I will not let down a single inch of the Christian requirement that lies upon you. Should a sweeping tide of bankruptcy set in upon the land, and reduce every individual who now hears me to the very humblest condition in society, God stands pledged to give food and raiment to all who depend upon Him—and it is not fair to make others bleed, that you may roll in affluence—it is not fair to desolate thousands of families, that yours may be upheld in luxury and splendour—and your best, and noblest, and kindest part is, to throw yourself on the promises of God, and He will hide you and your little ones in the secret of His pavilion, till these calamities be overpast.

III.—I trust it is evident from all that has been said, how it is only by the extension of Christian principle among the people of the earth, that the atrocities of war will at length be swept away from it; and that each of us is hastening the commencement of that blissful period, who, in his own sphere, is doing all that in him lies to bring his own heart, and the hearts of others, under the supreme influence of this principle. It is public opinion which, in the long run, governs the world; and while I look with confidence to a gradual revolution in the state of public opinion, from the omnipotence of gospel truth working its silent but effectual way through the families of mankind—yet I will not deny that much may be done to accelerate the advent of perpetual and universal peace, by a distinct body of men embarking their every talent, and their every acquirement, in the prosecution of this, as a distinct object. This was the way in which,

a few years ago, the British public were gained over to the cause of Africa. This is the way in which some of the other prophecies of the Bible are at this moment hastening to their accomplishment; and it is in this way, I apprehend, that the prophecy of my text may be indebted for its speedier fulfilment to the agency of men, selecting this as the assigned field on which their philanthropy shall expatiate. Were each individual member of such a scheme to prosecute his own walk, and come forward with his own peculiar contribution, the fruit of the united labours of all would be one of the finest collections of Christian eloquence, and of enlightened morals, and of sound political philosophy, that ever was presented to the world. I could not fasten on another cause more fitted to call forth such a variety of talent, and to rally around it so many of the generous and accomplished sons of humanity, and to give each of them a devotedness and a power far beyond whatever could be sent into the hearts of enthusiasts, by the mere impulse of literary ambition.

Let one take up the question of war in its principle, and make the full weight of his moral severity rest upon it, and upon all its abominations. Let another take up the question of war in its consequences, and bring his every power of graphical description to the task of presenting an awakened public with an impressive detail of its cruelties and its horrors. Let another neutralize the poetry of war, and dismantle it of all those bewitching splendours which the hand of misguided genius has thrown over it. Let another teach the world a truer and more magnanimous path to national glory, than any country of the world has yet walked in. Let another tell, with irresistible argument, how the Christian ethics of a nation is at one with the Christian ethics of its humblest individual. Let another bring all the resources of his political science to unfold the vast energies of defensive war, and show, that, instead of that ceaseless jealousy and disquietude which are ever keeping alive the flame of hostility among the nations, each may wait in prepared security, till the first footstep of an invader shall be the signal for mustering around the standard of its outraged rights, all the steel, and spirit, and patriotism of the country. Let another pour the light of modern speculation into the mysteries of trade, and prove that not a single war has been undertaken for any of its objects, where the millions and the millions more which were lavished on the cause, have not all been cheated away from us by the phantom of an imaginary interest. This may look to many like the Utopianism of a

romantic anticipation—but I shall never despair of the cause of truth addressed to a Christian public, when the clear light of principle can be brought to every one of its positions, and when its practical and conclusive establishment forms one of the most distinct of Heaven's prophecies—"that men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks—and that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn the art of war any more."

## SERMON VI.

*(Preached in the Tron Church, Glasgow, Nov. 19, 1817.)*

ON THE DEATH OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES.

“For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”—ISAIAH XXVI. 9.

I AM sorry that I shall not be able to extend the application of this text beyond its more direct and immediate bearing on that event on which we are now met to mingle our regrets, and our sensibilities, and our prayers—that, occupied as we all are with the mournful circumstance that has bereft our country of one of its brightest anticipations, I shall not be able to clear my way to the accomplishment of what is, strictly speaking, the congregational object of an address from the pulpit, which ought, in every possible case, to be an address to the conscience—that, therefore, instead of the concerns of personal Christianity, which, under my present text, I might, if I had space for it, press home upon the attention of my hearers, I shall be under the necessity of restricting myself to that more partial application of the text which relates to the matters of public Christianity. It is upon this account, as well as upon others, that I rejoice in the present appointment, for the improvement of that sad and sudden visitation which has so desolated the hearts and the hopes of a whole people. I therefore feel more freedom in coming forward with such remarks as, to the eyes of many, may wear a more public and even political complexion, than is altogether suited to the ministrations of the Sabbath. And yet I cannot but advert, and that in such terms of reproof as I think to be most truly applicable, to another set of men, whose taste for preaching is very much confined to these great and national occasions—who, habitually absent from church on the Sabbath, are yet observed, and that most prominently, to come together in eager and clustering attendance, on some interesting case of pathos or of politics—who in this way obtrude upon the general notice their loyalty to an earthly sovereign, while, in reference to their Lord and

Master, Jesus Christ, they scandalize all that is Christian in the general feeling, by their manifest contempt for Him and for His ordinances—who look for the ready compliance of ministers, in all that can gratify their inclinations for pageantry, while for the real, effective, and only important business of ministers, they have just as little reverence as if it were all a matter of hollow and insignificant parade. It is right to share in the triumphs of successful, and to shed the tears of afflicted, patriotism. But it is also right to estimate according to its true character, the patriotism of those who are never known to offer one homage to Christianity except when it is associated with the affairs of state; or with the wishes and the commands and the expectations of statesmen.

But the frivolous and altogether despicable taste of the men to whom I am alluding, must be entirely separated from such an occasion as the present. For, in truth, there never was an occasion of such magnitude, and at the same time of such peculiarity. There never was an occasion on which a matter of deep political interest was so blended and mixed up with matter of very deep and affecting tenderness. It does not wear the aspect of an affair of politics at all, but of an affair of the heart; and the novel exhibition is now offered, of all party irritations merging into one common and overwhelming sensibility. Oh! how it tends to quiet the agitations of every earthly interest and earthly passion, when Death steps forward and demonstrates the littleness of them all—when he stamps a character of such affecting insignificance on all that we are contending for—when, as if to make known the greatness of his power in the sight of a whole country, he stalks in ghastly triumph over the might and the grandeur of its most august family, and singling out that member of it on whom the dearest hopes and the gayest visions of the people were suspended, he, by one fatal and resistless blow, sends abroad the fame of his victory and his strength, throughout the wide extent of an afflicted nation. He has indeed put a cruel and impressive mockery on all the glories of mortality. A few days ago, all looked so full of life, and promise, and security—when we read of the bustle of the great preparation—and were told of the skill and the talent that were pressed into the service—and heard of the goodly attendance of the most eminent in the nation—and how officers of state, and the titled dignitaries of the land, were charioted in splendour to the scene of expectation, as to the joys of an approaching holiday—yes, and we were told too, that the bells of the sur-

rounding villages were all in readiness for the merry peal of gratulation, and that the expectant metropolis of our empire, on tiptoe for the announcement of her future monarch, had her winged couriers of despatch to speed the welcome message to the ears of her citizens, and that from her an embassy of gladness was to travel over all the provinces of the land; and the country, forgetful of all that she had suffered, was at length to offer the spectacle of one wide and rejoicing jubilee. O Death! thou hast indeed chosen the time and the victim, for demonstrating the grim ascendancy of thy power over all the hopes and fortunes of our species!—Our blooming Princess, whom fancy had decked with the coronet of these realms, and under whose gentle sway all bade so fair for the good and the peace of our nation, has he placed upon her bier! And, as if to fill up the measure of his triumph, has he laid by her side, that babe, who, but for him, might have been the monarch of a future generation; and he has done that, which by no single achievement he could otherwise have accomplished—he has sent forth over the whole of our land, the gloom of such a bereavement as cannot be replaced by any living descendant of royalty—he has broken the direct succession of the monarchy of England—by one and the same disaster, has he wakened up the public anxieties of the country, and sent a pang as acute as that of the most woful domestic visitation, into the heart of each of its families.

In the prosecution of the following discourse, as I have already stated, I shall satisfy myself with a very limited application of the text. I shall, in the first place, offer a few remarks on that branch of the righteousness of practical Christianity, which consists in the duty that subjects owe to their governors. And, in the second place, I shall attempt to improve the present great national disaster, to the object of impressing upon you, that, under all our difficulties and all our fears, it is the righteousness of the people alone which will exalt and perpetuate the nation; and that therefore if this great interest be neglected, the country, instead of reaping improvement from the judgments of God, is in imminent danger of being utterly overwhelmed by them.

I.—But here let me attempt the difficult task of rightly dividing the word of truth—and premise this head of discourse by admitting that I know nothing more hateful than the crouching spirit of servility. I know not a single class of men more unworthy of reverence, than the base and interested minions of a court. I



know not a set of pretenders who more amply deserve to be held out to the chastisement of public scorn, than they who, under the guise of public principle, are only aiming at personal aggrandizement. This is one corruption. But let us not forget that there is another—even a spurious patriotism, which would proscribe loyalty as one of the virtues altogether. Now, I cannot open my Bible, without learning that loyalty is one branch of the righteousness of practical Christianity. I am not seeking to please men but God, when I repeat His words in your hearing—that you should honour the king—that you should obey magistrates—that you should meddle not with those who are given to change—that you should be subject to principalities and powers—that you should lead a quiet and a peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. This, then, is a part of the righteousness which it is our business to teach, and sure I am that it is a part of righteousness which the judgment now dealt out to us, should, of all others, dispose you to learn. I know not a virtue more in harmony with the present feelings and afflictions and circumstances of the country, than that of a steadfast and determined loyalty. The time has been, when such an event as the one that we are now assembled to deplore, would have put every restless spirit into motion, and set a guilty ambition upon its murderous devices, and brought powerful pretenders with their opposing hosts of vassalage into the field, and enlisted towns and families under the rival banners, of a most destructive fray of contention, and thus have broken up the whole peace and confidence of society. Let us bless God that these days of barbarism are now gone by. But the vessel of the state is still exposed to many agitations. The sea of politics is a sea of storms, on which the gale of human passions would make her founder, were it not for the guidance of human principle; and, therefore, the truest policy of a nation is to Christianize her subjects, and to disseminate among them the influence of religion. The most skilful arrangement for rightly governing a state, is to scatter among the governed, not the terrors of power—not the threats of jealous and alarmed authority—not the demonstrations of sure and ready vengeance held forth by the rigour of an offended law. These may, at times, be imperiously called for. But a permanent security against the wild outbreaks of turbulence and disaster, is only to be attained by diffusing the lessons of the gospel throughout the great mass of our population—even those lessons which are utterly and diame-

trically at antipodes with all that is criminal and wrong in the spirit of political disaffection. The only radical counteraction to this evil is to be found in the spirit of Christianity; and though animated by such a spirit, a man may put on the intrepidity of one of the old prophets, and denounce even in the ear of royalty the profligacies which may disgrace or deform it—though animated by such a spirit, he may lift his protesting voice in the face of an unchristian magistracy, and tell them of their errors—though animated by such a spirit, he, to avoid every appearance of evil, will neither stoop to the flattery of power, nor to the solicitations of patronage—and though all this may bear to the superficial eye, a hard, and repulsive, and hostile aspect towards the established dignities of the land—yet forget not, that if a real and honest principle of Christianity lie at the root of this spirit, there exists within the bosom of such a man, a foundation of principle, on which all the lessons of Christianity will rise into visible and consistent exemplification. And it is he and such as he, who will turn out to be the salvation of the country, when the hour of her threatened danger is approaching—and it is just in proportion as you spread and multiply such a character, that you raise within the bosom of the nation the best security against all her fluctuations—and, as in every other department of human concerns, so will it be found, that, in this particular department, Christians are the salt of the earth, and Christianity the most copious and emanating fountain of all the guardian virtues of peace, and order, and patriotism.

The judgment under which we now labour, supplies, I think, one touching, and, to every good and Christian mind, one powerful argument of loyalty. It is the distance of the prince from his people which feeds the political jealousy of the latter, and which by removing the former to a height of inaccessible grandeur, places him, as it were, beyond the reach of their sympathies. Much of that political rancour which festers, and agitates, and makes such a tremendous appearance of noise and of hostility in our land, is due to the aggravating power of distance. If two of the deadliest political antagonists in our country, who abuse, and vilify, and pour forth their stormy eloquence on each other, whether in parliament or from the press, were actually to come into such personal and familiar contact, as would infuse into their controversy the sweetening of mere acquaintanceship, this very circumstance would disarm and do away almost all their violence. The truth is, that when one man rails against an-

other across the table of a legislative assembly, or when he works up his fermenting imagination, and pens his virulent sentences against another, in the retirement of a closet—he is fighting against a man at a distance—he is exhausting his strength against an enemy whom he does not know—he is swelling into indignation, and into all the movements of what he thinks right and generous principle, against a chimera of his own apprehension; and a similar reaction comes back upon him from the quarter that he has assailed, and thus the controversy thickens, and the delusion every day gets more impenetrable, and the distance is ever widening, and the breach is always becoming more hopeless and more irreparable; and all this between two men, who, if they had been in such accidental circumstances of juxtaposition as could have let them a little more into one another's feelings and to one another's sympathies, would at least have had all the asperities of their difference smoothed away by the mere softenings and kindlinesses of ordinary human intercourse.

Now let me apply this remark to the mutual state of sentiment which obtains between the different orders of the community. Amongst the rich there is apt at times to rankle an injurious and unworthy impression of the poor—and just because these poor stand at a distance from them—just because they come not into contact with that which would draw them out in courteousness to their persons, and in benevolent attentions to their families. Amongst the poor, on the other hand, there is often a disdainful suspicion of the wealthy, as if they were actuated by a proud indifference to them and to their concerns, and as if they were placed away from them at so distant and lofty an elevation as not to require the exercise of any of those cordialities which are ever sure to spring in the bosom of man to man, when they come to know each other, and to have the actual sight of each other. But, let any accident place an individual of the higher before the eyes of the lower order, on the ground of their common humanity—let the latter be made to see that the former are akin to themselves in all the sufferings and in all the sensibilities of our common inheritance—let, for example, the greatest chieftain of the territory die, and the report of his weeping children, or of his distracted widow, be sent through the neighbourhood—or let an infant of his family be in suffering, and the mothers of the humble vicinity be run to for counsel and assistance—or, in any other

way, let the rich, instead of being viewed by their inferiors through the dim and distant medium of that fancied interval which separates the ranks of society, be seen as heirs of the same frailty, and as dependent on the same sympathies with themselves—and at that moment all the floodgates of honest sympathy will be opened—and the lowest servants of the establishment will join in the cry of distress which has come upon their family—and the neighbouring cottagers, to share in their grief, have only to recognise them as the partakers of one nature, and to perceive an assimilation of feelings and of circumstances between them.

Let me further apply all this to the sons and the daughters of royalty. The truth is, that they appear to the public eye as stalking on a platform so highly elevated above the general level of society that it removes them, as it were, from all the ordinary sympathies of our nature. And though we read at times of their galas, and their birth-days, and their drawing-rooms, there is nothing in all this to attach us to their interests and their feelings, as the inhabitants of a familiar home—as the members of an affectionate family. Surrounded as they are with the glare of a splendid notoriety, we scarcely recognise them as men and as women, who can rejoice, and weep, and pine with disease, and taste the sufferings of mortality, and be oppressed with anguish, and love with tenderness, and experience in their bosoms the same movements of grief or of affection that we do ourselves. And thus it is that they labour under a real and heavy disadvantage. There is not, in their case, the counteraction of that kindly influence to alleviate the weight or the malignity of prejudice which men of a humbler station are ever sure to enjoy. In the case of a man whose name is hardly known beyond the limits of his personal acquaintance, the tale of calumny that is raised against him extends not far beyond these limits; and, therefore, wherever it is heard, it meets with a something to blunt and to soften it, in those very cordialities which the familiar exhibition of him as a brother of our common nature is fitted to awaken. But it is not so with those in the elevated walks of society. Their names are familiar where their persons are unknown; and whatever malignity may attach to the one, circulates abroad, and is spread far beyond the limits of their possible intercourse with human beings, and meets with no kindly counteraction from our acquaintance with the other. And this may explain how it is that the same exalted personage

may, at one and the same time, be suffering under a load of most unmerited obloquy from the wide and the general public, and be to all his familiar domestics an object of the most enthusiastic devotedness and regard.

Now, if through an accidental opening, the public should be favoured with a domestic exhibition—if by some overpowering visitation of Providence upon an illustrious family, the members of it should come to be recognised as the partakers of one common humanity with ourselves—if instead of beholding them in their gorgeousness as princes, we look to them in the natural evolution of their sensibilities as men—if the stately palace should be turned into a house of mourning—in one word, if if death should do what he has already done—he has met the Princess of England in the prime and promise of her days, and as she was moving onward on her march to a hereditary throne, he has laid her at his feet! Ah, my brethren, when the imagination dwells on that bed where the remains of departed youth and departed infancy are lying—when, instead of crowns and canopies of grandeur, it looks to the forlorn husband, and the weeping father, and the human feelings which agitate their bosom, and the human tears which flow down their cheeks, and all such symptoms of deep affliction as bespeak the workings of suffering and dejected nature—what ought to be, and what actually is, the feeling of the country at so sad an exhibition? It is just the feeling of the domestics and the labourers at Claremont. All is soft and tender as womanhood. Nor is there a peasant in our land who is not touched to the very heart when he thinks of the unhappy stranger who is now spending his days in grief and his nights in sleeplessness—as he mourns alone in his darkened chamber, and refuses to be comforted—as he turns in vain for rest to his troubled feelings and cannot find it—as he gazes on the memorials of an affection that blessed the brightest, happiest, shortest year of his existence—as he looks back on the endearments of the bygone months, and the thought that they have for ever fled away from him, turns all to agony—as he looks forward on the blighted prospect of this world's pilgrimage, and feels that all which bound him to existence, is now torn irretrievably away from him! There is not a British heart that does not feel to this interesting visitor all the force and all the tenderness of a most affecting relationship; and, go where he may, will he ever be recognised and cherished as a much-loved member of the British family.

It is in this way, that through the avenue of a nation's tenderness, we can estimate the strength and the steadfastness of a nation's loyalty. On minor questions of the constitution we may storm, and rave, and look at each other a little ferociously—and it was by some such appearance as this, that he who, in the days of his strength, was the foulest and the most formidable of all our enemies, said of the country in which we live, that, torn by factions, it was going rapidly to dissolution. Yet these are but the skirmishings of a pettier warfare—the movements of nature and of passion in a land of freemen—the harmless contests of men pulling in opposite ways at some of the smaller ropes in the tackling of our great national vessel. But look to these men in the time of need and the hour of suffering—look to them now, when in one great and calamitous visitation, the feeling of every animosity is overborne—look to them now, when the darkness is gathering and the boding cloud of disaster hangs over us, and some chilling fear of insecurity is beginning to circulate in whispers through the land—look to them now, when in the entombment of this sad and melancholy day, the hopes of more than half a century are to be interred—look to them now, when from one end of the country to the other, there is the mourning of a very great and sore lamentation, so that all who pass by may say, This is a grievous mourning to the people of the land. Oh! is it possible that these can be other than honest tears, or that tears of pity can, on such an emergency as the present, be other than tears of patriotism! Who does not see this principle sitting in visible expression on the general countenance of the nation—that the people are sound at heart, and that with this, as the main-sheet of our dependence, we may still, under the blessing of God, weather and surmount all the difficulties which threaten us.

II.—I now proceed to the second head of discourse, under which I was to attempt such an improvement of this great national disaster, as might enforce the lesson, that under every fear and every difficulty, it is the righteousness of the people alone which will exalt and perpetuate a nation; and that, therefore, if this great interest be neglected, instead of learning anything from the judgments of God we are in imminent danger of being utterly overwhelmed by them.

Under my first head I restricted myself exclusively to the virtue of loyalty, which is one of the special, but I most willingly admit, nay, and most earnestly contend, is also one of the essen-

tial attributes of righteousness. But there is a point on which I profess myself to be altogether at issue with a set of men, who composed, at one time, whatever they do now, a very numerous class of society. I mean those men, who, with all the ostentation and all the intolerance of loyalty, evinced an utter indifference either to their own personal religion or to the religion of the people who were around them—who were satisfied with the single object of keeping the neighbourhood in a state of political tranquillity—who, if they could only get the population to be quiet, cared not for the extent of profaneness or of profligacy that was amongst them—and who, while they thought to signalize themselves in the favour of their earthly king, by keeping down every turbulent or rebellious movement among his subjects, did in fact, by their own conspicuous example, lead them and cheer them on in their rebellion against the King of heaven—and, as far as the mischief could be wrought by the contagion of their personal influence, these men of loyalty did what in them lay, to spread a practical contempt for Christianity, and for all its ordinances, throughout the land.

Now, I would have such men to understand, if any such there be within the sphere of my voice, that it is not with their loyalty that I am quarreling. I am only telling them, that this single attribute of righteousness will never obtain a steady footing in the hearts of the people, except on the ground of a general principle of righteousness. I am telling them how egregiously they are out of their own politics, in ever thinking that they can prop the virtue of loyalty in a nation, while they are busily employed by the whole instrumentality of their example and of their doings, in sapping the very foundation upon which it is reared. I am telling them, that if they wish to see loyalty in perfection, and such loyalty, too, as requires not any scowling vigilance of theirs to uphold it, they must look to the most moral, and orderly, and Christianized districts of the country. I am merely teaching them a lesson, of which they seem to be ignorant, that if you loosen the hold of Christianity over the hearts of the population, you pull down from their ascendancy all the virtues of Christianity, of which loyalty is one. Yes, and I will come yet a little closer, and take a look of that loyalty which exists in the shape of an isolated principle in their own bosoms. I should like to gauge the dimensions of this loyalty of theirs, in its state of disjunction from the general principle of Christianity. I wish to know the kind of loyalty which characterizes the pretenders

to whom I am alluding—the men who have no value for preaching, but as it stands associated with the pageantry of state—the men who would reckon it the most grievous of all heresies, to be away from church on some yearly day of the king's appointment, but are seldom within its walls on the weekly day of God's appointment—the men who, if ministers were away from their post of loyalty, on an occasion like the present, would, without mercy, and without investigation, denounce them as suspicious characters; but who, when we are at the post of piety, dispensing the more solemn ordinances of Christianity, openly lead the way in that crowded and eager emigration, which carries half the rank and opulence of the town away from us. What, oh! what is the length, and the breadth, and the height, and the depth of this vapouring, swaggering, high-sounding loyalty?—It is nothing better than the loyalty of political subalterns, in the low game of partizanship, or of whippers-in to an existing administration—it is not the loyalty which will avail us in the day of danger—it is not to them that we need to look in the evil hour of a country's visitation—but to those right-hearted, sound-thinking, Christian men, who, without one interest to serve, or one hope to forward, honour their king, because they fear their God.

Let me assure such a man, if such a man there is within the limits of this assembly—that, keen as his scent may be after political heresies, the deadliest of all such heresies lies at his own door—that there is not to be found, within the city of our habitation, a rottener member of the community than himself—that, withering as he does by his example the principle which lies at the root of all national prosperity, it is he, and such as he, who stands opposed to the best and the dearest objects of loyalty—and, if ever that shall happen, which it is my most delightful confidence that God will avert from us and from our children's children to the latest posterity—if ever the wild frenzy of revolution shall run through the ranks of Britain's population, these are the men who will be the most deeply responsible for all its atrocities and for all its horrors.

Having thus briefly adverted to one of the causes of impiety and consequent disloyalty, I shall proceed to offer a few remarks on the great object of teaching the people righteousness, not so much in a general and didactic manner, as in the way of brief, and, if possible, of memorable illustration—gathering my argument from the present event, and availing myself, at the same



time, of such principles as have been advanced in the course of the preceding observations.

My next remark, then, on this subject, will be taken from a sentiment, of which I think you must all on the present occasion feel the force and the propriety. Would it not have been most desirable could the whole population of the city have been admitted to join in the solemn services of the day? Do you not think that they are precisely such services as would have spread a loyal and patriotic influence amongst them? Is it not experimentally the case, that, over the untimely grave of our fair Princess, the meanest of the people would have shed as warm and plentiful a tribute of honest sensibility as the most refined and delicate amongst us? And, I ask, is it not unfortunate, that, on the day of such an affecting, and, if I may so style it, such a national exercise, there should not have been twenty more churches with twenty more ministers, to have contained the whole crowd of eager and interested listeners? A man of mere loyalty, without one other accomplishment, will, I am sure, participate in a regret so natural; but couple this regret with the principle, that the only way in which the loyalty of the people can effectually be maintained, is on the basis of their Christianity, and then the regret in question embraces an object still more general—and well were it for us, if, amid the insecurity of families, and the various fluctuations of fortune and of arrangement that are taking place in the highest walks of society, the country were led, by the judgment with which it has now been visited, to deepen the foundation of all its order and of all its interests in the moral education of its people. Then indeed the text would have its literal fulfilment. When the judgments of God are in the earth, the rulers of the world would lead the inhabitants thereof to learn righteousness.

In our own city, much in this respect remains to be accomplished; and I speak of the great mass of our city and suburb population, when I say, that through the week they lie open to every rude and random exposure—and when Sabbath comes, no solemn appeal to the conscience, no stirring recollections of the past, no urgent calls to resolve against the temptations of the future, come along with it. It is undeniable, that within the compass of a few square miles, the daily walk of the vast majority of our people is beset with a thousand contaminations; and whether it be on the way to the market, or on the way to the work-shop, or on the way to the crowded manufactory, or

on the way to any one resort of industry that you choose to condescend upon, or on the way to the evening home, where the labours of a virtuous day should be closed by the holy thankfulness of a pious and affectionate family; be it in passing from one place to another, or be it amid all the throng of sedentary occupations; there is not one day of the six, and not one hour of one of these days, when frail and unsheltered man is not plied by the many allurements of a world lying in wickedness—when evil communications are not assailing him with their corruptions—when the full tide of example does not bear down upon his purposes, and threaten to sweep all his purity and all his principle away from him. And when the seventh-day comes, where, I would ask, are the efficient securities that ought to be provided against all those inundations of profligacy which rage without control through the week, and spread such a desolating influence among the morals of the existing generation?—O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon—this seventh-day, on which it would require a whole army of labourers to give every energy which belongs to them, to the plenteous harvest of so mighty a population, witnesses more than one-half of the people precluded from attending the house of God, and wandering every man after the counsel of his own heart, and in the sight of his own eyes—on this day, the ear of Heaven is assailed with a more audacious cry of rebellion than on any other, and the open door of invitation plies with its welcome, the hundreds and the thousands who have found their habitual way to the haunts of depravity. And is there no room, then, to wish for twenty more churches, and twenty more ministers—for men of zeal and of strength, who might go forth among these wanderers, and compel them to come in—for men of holy fervour, who might set the terrors of hell and the free offers of salvation before them—for men of affection who might visit the sick, the dying, and the afflicted, and cause the irresistible influence of kindness to circulate at large among their families—for men who, while they fastened their most intense aim on the great object of preparing sinners for eternity, would scatter along the path of their exertions all the blessings of order, and contentment, and sobriety, and at length make it manifest as day, that the righteousness of the people is the only effectual antidote to a country's ruin—the only path to a country's glory?

My next remark shall be founded on a principle to which I have already alluded—the desirableness of a more frequent in-

tercourse between the higher and the lower orders of society ; and what more likely to accomplish this, than a larger ecclesiastical accommodation ?—not the scanty provision of the present day, by which the poor are excluded from the church altogether, but such a wide and generous system of accommodation, as that the rich and the poor might sit in company together in the house of God. It is this Christian fellowship which, more than any other tie, links so intimately together the high and the low in country parishes. There is, however, another particular to which I would advert, and though I cannot do so without magnifying my office, yet I know not a single circumstance which so upholds the golden line of life amongst our agricultural population, as the manner in which the gap between the pinnacle of the community and its base is filled up by the week-day duties of the clergyman—by that man, of whom it has been well said, that he belongs to no rank, because he associates with all ranks—by that man, whose presence may dignify the palace, but whose peculiar glory it is to carry the influences of friendship and piety into cottages.

This is the age of moral experiment ; and much has been devised in our day for promoting the virtue, and the improvement, and the economical habits of the lower orders of society. But in all these attempts to raise a barrier against the growing profligacy of our towns, one important element seems to have passed unheeded, and to have been altogether omitted in the calculation. In all the comparative estimates of the character of a town and the character of a country population, it has been little attended to, that the former are distinguished from the latter by the dreary, hopeless, and almost impassable distance at which they stand from their parish minister. Now, though it be at the hazard of again magnifying my office, I must avow, in the hearing of you all, that there is a moral charm in his personal attentions and his affectionate civilities, and the ever-recurring influence of his visits and his prayers, which, if restored to the people, would impart a new moral aspect, and eradicate much of the licentiousness and the dishonesty that abound in our cities. On this day of national calamity, if ever the subject should be adverted to from the pulpit, we may be allowed to express our riveted convictions on the close alliance that obtains between the political interests and the religious character of a country. And I am surely not out of place, when, on looking at the mighty mass of a city population, I state my

apprehension, that if something be not done to bring this enormous physical strength under the control of Christian and humanized principle, the day may yet come, when it may lift against the authorities of the land its brawny vigour, and discharge upon them all the turbulence of its rude and volcanic energy.

Apart altogether from the essential character of the gospel, and keeping out of view the solemn representations of Christianity, by which we are told that each individual of these countless myriads carries an undying principle in his bosom, and that it is the duty of the minister to cherish it, and to watch over it, as one who must render, at the judgment-seat, an account of the charge which has been committed to him—apart from this consideration entirely, which I do not now insist upon, though I blush not to avow its paramount importance over all that can be alleged on the inferior ground of political expediency, yet, on that ground alone, I can gather argument enough for the mighty importance of such men, devoted to the labours of their own separate and peculiar employments—giving an unbewildered attention to the office of dealing with the hearts and principles of the thousands who are around them—coming forth from the preparations of an unbroken solitude, armed with all the omnipotence of truth among their fellow-citizens—and who, rich in the resources of a mind which meditates upon these things and gives itself wholly to them, are able to suit their admonitions to all the varieties of human character, and to draw their copious and persuasive illustrations from every quarter of human experience. But I speak not merely of their Sabbath ministrations. Give to each a manageable extent of town, within the compass of his personal exertions, and where he might be able to cultivate a ministerial influence among all its families—put it into his power to dignify the very humblest of its tenements by the courteousness of his soothing and benevolent attentions—let it be such a district of population as may not bear him down by the multiplicity of its demands; but where, without any feverish or distracting variety of labour, he may be able to familiarize himself to every house, and to know every individual, and to visit every spiritual patient, and to watch every deathbed, and to pour out the sympathies of a pious and affectionate bosom over every mourning and bereaved family. Bring every city of the land under such a moral regimen as this, and another generation would not pass away, ere

righteousness ran down all their streets like a mighty river. That sullen depravity of character, which the gibbet cannot scare away, and which sits so immovable in the face of the most menacing severities and in despite of the yearly recurrence of the most terrifying examples—could not keep its ground against the mild but resistless application of an effective Christian ministry. The very worst of men would be constrained to feel the power of such an application. Sunk as they are in ignorance, and inured as they have been from the first years of their neglected boyhood, to scenes of week-day profligacy and Sabbath profanation—these men, of whom it may be said, that all their moralities are extinct, and all their tendernesses blunted—even they would feel the power of that reviving touch, which the mingled influence of kindness and piety can often impress on the souls of the most abandoned—even they would open the floodgates of their hearts, and pour forth the tide of an honest welcome on the men who had come in all the cordiality of goodwill to themselves and to their families. And thus might a humanizing and an exalting influence be made to circulate through all their dwelling-places: and such a system as this, labouring as it must do at first, under all the discouragements of a heavy and unpromising outset, would gather, during every year of its perseverance, new triumphs and new testimonies to its power. And all that is ruthless and irreclaimable in the character of the present day, would in time be replaced by the softening virtues of a purer and a better generation. This I know to be the dream of many a philanthropist; and a dream as visionary as the very wildest among the fancies of Utopianism it ever will be, under any other expedient than the one I am now pointing to; and nothing, nothing within the whole compass of nature, or of experience, will ever bring it to its consummation, but the multiplied exertions of the men who carry in their hearts the doctrine, and who bear upon their persons the seal and commission, of the New Testament. And, if it be true that towns are the great instruments of political revolution—if it be there that all the elements of disturbance are ever found in busiest fermentation—if we learn, from the history of the past, that they are the favourite and the frequented rallying-places for all the brooding violence of the land—who does not see that the pleading earnestness of the Christian minister is at one with the soundest maxims of political wisdom, when he urges upon the rulers and magistrates of the land, that this is indeed

the cheap defence of a nation—this the vitality of all its strength and of all its greatness.

And it is with the most undissembled satisfaction that I advert to the first step of such a process, within the city of our habitation, as I have now been recommending. It may still be the day of small things; but it is such a day as ought not to be despised. The prospect of another church and another labourer in this interesting field demands the most respectful acknowledgments of the Christian public, to the men who preside over the administration of our affairs; and they, I am sure, will not feel it to be oppressive, if, met by the willing cordialities of a responding population, the demand should ring in their ears for another and another, till, like the moving of the Spirit on the face of the waters, which made beauty and order to emerge out of the rude materials of creation, the germ of moral renovation shall at length burst into all the efflorescence of moral accomplishment—and the voice of psalms shall again be heard in our families—and impurity and violence shall be banished from our streets—and then the erasure made, in these degenerate days, on the escutcheons of our city, again replaced in characters of gold, shall tell to every stranger that Glasgow flourisheth through the preaching of the Word.\*

And though, under the mournful remembrance of our departed Princess, we cannot but feel on this day of many tears, as if a volley of lightning from heaven had been shot at the pillar of our State, and struck away the loveliest ornament from its pinnacle, and shook the noble fabric to its base; yet still, if we strengthen its foundation in the principle and character of our people, it will stand secure on the deep and steady basis of a country's worth which can never be overthrown. And thus an enduring memorial of our Princess will be embalmed in the hearts of the people; and good will emerge out of this dark and bitter dispensation, if, when the judgments of God are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness.

\* The original motto of the city is, "Let Glasgow flourish through the preaching of the Word;" which, by the curtailment alluded to, has been reduced to the words, "Let Glasgow flourish."

## NOTE.

Dr. Adam Smith, in his Treatise on the *Wealth of Nations*, argues against religious establishments on the ground that the article of religious instruction should be left to the pure operation of demand and supply, like any article of ordinary merchandise. He seems to have overlooked one most material circumstance of distinction. The native and untaught propensities of the human constitution will always of themselves secure a demand for the commodities of trade, sufficiently effective to bring forward a supply equal to the real needs of the population, and to their power of purchasing. But the appetite for religious instruction is neither so strong nor so universal as to secure such an effective demand for it. Had the people been left in this matter to themselves, there would, in point of fact, have been large tracts of country without a place of worship, and without a minister. The legislature have met the population half way, by providing them with a church and a religious teacher, in every little district of the land; and by this arrangement have increased to a very great degree the quantity of attendance and the quantity of actual ministration. In point of fact, a much greater number of people do come to church, and do come within the application of Christian influence, when the church and the preacher is provided for them, than if they had been left to build a meeting-house, and to maintain a preacher themselves. There is a far surer and more abundant supply of this wholesome influence dealt out among the population under the former arrangement, than under the latter one.

The argument of Dr. Smith goes to demonstrate the folly of a national establishment, either of meal-sellers or of butchers, or of any national establishment for supplying the people with the necessaries and the comforts of life. But the peculiarity already adverted to, renders it totally inapplicable to the question of a national establishment for supplying the people with the lessons of Christianity.—[See *Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers*, vol. i. pp. 452-456, cheap edition.—Ed.]

## SERMON VII.

*(Preached before the Glasgow Auxiliary to the Hibernian Society for establishing Schools, and circulating the Holy Scriptures in Ireland. 1817.)*

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY APPLIED TO THE CASE OF  
RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES.

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye: and behold a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite! first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”—MATTHEW vii. 3-5.

THE word “beam” suggests the idea of a rafter; and it looks very strange that a thing of such magnitude should be at all conceived to have its seat or fixture in the eye. To remove by a single sentence this misapprehension, I shall just say that the word in the original signifies also a thorn—a something that the eye has room for, but at the same time much larger than a mote, and which must, therefore, have a more powerful effect in deranging the vision, and preventing a man from forming a right estimate of the object he is looking at. Take this along with you, and the three verses will run thus:—“Why beholdest thou the mote that is thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the thorn that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold a thorn is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite! first cast out the thorn out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

In my farther observations on this passage, I shall first introduce what I propose to make the main subject of my discourse, by a very short application of the leading principle of my text, to the case of those judgments that we are so ready to pronounce on each other in private life. And I shall, secondly, proceed to the main subject, namely, that more general kind of judgment we are apt to pass on the men of a different persuasion in matters of religion.

I.—Every fault of conduct in the outer man may be run up



to some defect of principle in the inner man. It is this defect of principle which gives the fault all its criminality. It is this alone which makes it odious in the sight of God. It is upon this that the condemnation of the law rests; and on the day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open, it will be the share that the heart had in the matter which will form the great topic of examination, when the deeds done in the body pass under the review of the Son of God. For example, it is a fault to speak evil one of another; but the essence of the fault lies in the want of that charity which thinketh no ill. Had the heart been filled with this principle, no such bad thing as slander would have come out of it; but if the heart be not filled with this principle, and in its stead there be the operation of envy—or a desire to avenge yourselves of others, by getting the judgment of men to go against them—or a taste for the ludicrous, which, rather than be ungratified, will expose the peculiarities of the absent to the mirth of a company—or the idle and thoughtless levity of gossiping which cannot be checked by any consideration of the mischief that may be done by its indulgence;—I say, if any or all of these, take up that room in the heart which should have been filled with charity, and sent forth the fruits of it, then the stream will just be as the fountain, and out of the treasure of the evil heart, there will flow that evil practice of censoriousness on which the gospel of Christ pronounces its severe and decisive condemnation.

But though all evil-speaking be referable to the want of a good, or the existence of an evil principle in the heart, yet there is one style of evil-speaking different from another; and you can easily conceive how a man addicted to one way of it, may hate, and despise, and have a mortal antipathy to another way of it. In this case, it is not the thing itself in its essential deformity that he condemns; it is some of the disgusting accompaniments of the thing; and while these excite his condemnation, and he views the man in whom they are realized, as every way worthy of being reprobated, he may not be aware, all the while, that in himself there exists an equal, and perhaps a much larger portion of that very principle which he should be reprobated for. The forms of evil-speaking break out into manifold varieties. There is the soft insinuation. There is the resentful outcry. There is the manly and indignant disapproval. There is the invective of vulgar malignity. There is the poignancy of satirical remark. There is the giddiness of mere

volatility which trips so carelessly along, and spreads its entertaining levities over a gay and light-hearted party. These are all so many transgressions of one and the same duty; and you can easily conceive an enlightened Christian sitting in judgment over them all, and taking hold of the right principle upon which he would condemn them all; and which, if brought to bear with efficacy on the consciences of the different offenders, would not merely silence the passionate evil-speaker out of his outrageous exclamations, and restrain the malignant evil-speaker from his deliberate thrusts at the reputation of the absent; but would rebuke the humorous evil-speaker out of his fanciful and amusing sketches, and the gossiping evil-speaker out of his tiresome and never-ending narratives. Now you may further conceive how a man who realizes upon his own character one of these varieties might have a positive dislike to another of them; how the open and generous-hearted denouncer of what is wrong may hate from his very soul the poison of a sly and secret insinuation; how he who delivers himself in the chastened and well-bred tone of a gentleman may recoil from the violence of an unmannerly invective; how he who enjoys the ridiculous of character may be hurt and offended at hearing of the criminal of character;—and thus each, with the thorn in his own eye, may advert with regret and disapprobation to the mote in his brother's eye.

Now, mark the two advantages which arise from every man bringing himself to a strict examination, that he may if possible find out the principle of that fault in his own mind which he conceives to deform the doings and the character of another. His attention is carried away from the mere accompaniment of the fault to its actual and constituting essence. He pursues his search from the outward and accidental varieties, to the one principle which spreads the leaven of iniquity over them all. By looking into his own heart he is made acquainted with the movements of this principle. When forced to disapprove of others, his disapprobation is not a matter of taste or of education, but the entire and well-founded disapprobation of principle. He sees where the radical mischief of the whole business lies. He sees that if the principle of doing no ill were established within the heart, it would cut up by the root all evil-speaking in all its shapes and in all its modifications. His own diligent keeping of his own heart upon this subject would bring the matter into his frequent contemplation, and enable him to perceive where its

essence and its malignity lay, and give him an enlightened judgment of it in all its effects and workings upon others; and thus, by the very progress of struggling against it, and watching against it, and praying against it, and in the strength of divine grace prevailing against it, and at length succeeding in pulling the thorn out of his own eye, he would see clearly to cast out the mote out of his brother's eye.

But another mighty advantage of this self-examination is, that the more a man does examine, the more does he discover the infirmities of his own character. That very infirmity against which, in another, he might have protested with all the force of a vehement indignation, he might find lurking in his own bosom, though under the disguise of a different form. Such a discovery as this will temper his indignation. It will humble him into the meekness of wisdom. It will soften him into charity. It will infuse a candour and a gentleness into all his judgments. The struggle he has had with himself to keep down the sin he sees in another, will train him to an indulgence he might never have felt, had he been altogether blind to the diseases of his own moral constitution. When he tries to reform a neighbour, the attempt will be marked by all the mildness of one who is deeply conscious of his own frailties, and fearful of the exposures which he himself may have to endure. And I leave it to your own experience of human nature to determine, whether he bids fairer for success who rebukes with the intolerant tone of a man who is unconscious of his own blemishes; or he who, with all the spirituality of a humble and exercised Christian, endeavours to restore him who is overtaken in a fault, with the spirit of meekness, "considering himself lest he also be tempted."

Now the fault of evil-speaking is only one out of the many. The lesson of the text might be farther illustrated by other cases and other examples. I might specify the various forms of worldliness, and wilfulness, and fraud, and falsehood, and profanity, and show how the man who realizes these sins in one form, might pass his condemnatory sentence on the man who realizes the very same sins in another form; and I might succeed in saying to the conviction of his conscience, even as Nathan said to David, "Thou art the man;" and might press home upon him the mighty task of self-examination; and set him from that to the task of diligent reform, that he might be enabled to see the fault of his neighbour more clearly, and rebuke it more gently, and winningly, and considerately. But my time restrains

me from expatiating; and however great my reluctance at being withdrawn from the higher office of dealing with the hearts and the consciences of individuals, to any other office, which, however good in itself, bears a most minute and insignificant proportion to the former, yet I must not forget that I stand here as the advocate of a public Society;—and I therefore propose to throw the remainder of my discourse into such a train of observation as may bear upon its designs and its enterprises.

II.—I now proceed, then, to the more general kind of judgment, which we are apt to pass on men of a different persuasion in matters of religion,—There is something in the very circumstance of its being a different religion from our own, which, prior to all our acquaintance with its details, is calculated to repel and to alarm us. It is not the religion in which we have been educated. It is not the religion which furnishes us with our associations of sacredness. Nay, it is a religion which, if admitted into our creed, would tear asunder all these associations. It would break up all the repose of our established habits. It would darken the whole field of our accustomed contemplations. It would put to flight all those visions of the mind which stood linked with the favour of God, and the blissful prospects of eternity. It would unsettle, and disturb, and agitate; and this, not merely because it threw a doubtfulness over the question of our personal security, but because it shocked our dearest feelings of tenderness for that which we had been trained to love, and of veneration for that which we have been trained to look at in the aspect of awful and imposing solemnity.

Add to all this, the circumstance of its being a religion with the intolerance of which our fathers had to struggle unto the death; a religion which lighted up the fires of persecution in other days; a religion which at one time put on a face of terror, and bathed its hands in the blood of cruel martyrdom; a religion, by resistance to which, the men of a departed generation are embalmed in the memory of the present, among the worthies of our established faith. We have only to contemplate the influence of these things, when handed down by tradition, and written in the most popular histories of the land, and told round the evening fire to the children of every cottage family, who listen in breathless wonderment to the tale of midnight alarm, and kindle at the battle-cry lifted by the patriots of a former age, when they made their noble stand for the outraged rights of conscience and of liberty; we have only to think of these things,

and we shall cease our amazement, that such a religion, even though its faults and its merits be equally unknown, should light up a passionate aversion in many a bosom, and have a recoiling sense of horror and sacrilege and blasphemy associated with its very name.

Now Popery is just such a religion: and I appeal to many present, if, though ignorant of almost all its doctrines and all its distinctions, there does not spring up a quickly felt antipathy in their bosoms even at the mention of Popery. There can be no doubt, that for one or two generations, this feeling has been rapidly on the decline. But it still lurks, and operates, and spreads a very wide and sensible infusion over the great mass of our Scottish population. There is now a dormancy about it, and it does not break out into those rude and tumultuary surges, which at one time filled our streets with violence, and sent a ferment of jealousy and alarm over the whole face of our country. But we still meet with the traces of its existence. We feel it in our own bosoms when we hear of any of the ceremonials of Popery: and I just ask you to think of those peculiar sensations which rise within you at the mention of the holy water, or the consecrated wafer, or the extreme unction of the Catholic ritual. There is still a sensation of repugnance, though it be dim, and in its painfulness it be rapidly departing away from us; and I think that, even at this hour, should a Popish chapel send up its lofty minarets, and spread a rich and expanded magnificence before the public eye, though many look with unmingled delight on the grandeur of the ascending pile, yet there may still be detected a visible expression of jealousy and offence in the side-long glance, and the inward and half-suppressed murmuring of the occasional passenger.

Now, is it not conceivable that such a traditional repugnance to Popery may exist in the very same mind, with a total ignorance of what those things are for which it merits our repugnance? May there not be a kind of sensitive recoil in the heart against this religion, while the understanding is entirely blind to those alone features which justify our dislike to it? May there not be all the violence of an antipathy within us at Popery, and there be at the same time within us all the faults and all the errors of Popery? May not the thorn be in our own eye, while the mote in our neighbour's eye is calling forth all the severity of our indignation? While we are sitting in the chair of judgment, and dealing forth from the eminence of a superior discern-

ment, our invectives against what we think to be sacrilegious in the creed and practice of others, may it not be possible to detect in ourselves the same perversion of principle, the same idolatrous resistance to truth and righteousness; and surely, it well becomes us in this case, while we are so ready to precipitate our invectives upon the head of bystanders, to pass a humbling examination upon ourselves, that we may come to a more enlightened estimate of that which is the object of our condemnation; and that, when we condemn, we may do it with wisdom, and with the meekness of wisdom.

Let us therefore take a nearer look of Popery, and try to find out how much of Popery there is in the religion of Protestants.

But, let it be premised, that many of the disciples of this religion disclaim much of what we impute to them; that the Popery of a former age may not be a fair specimen of the Popery of the present; that, in point of fact, many of its professors have evinced all the spirit of devout and enlightened Christians; that in many districts of Popery, the Bible is in full and active circulation, and that thus, while the name and externals are retained, and waken up all our traditional repugnance against it, there may be among thousands and tens of thousands of its nominal adherents, all the soul, and substance, and principle, and piety of a reformed faith. When I therefore enumerate the errors of Popery, I do not assert the extent to which they exist. I merely say that such errors are imputed to them; and instead of launching forth into severities against those who are thus charged, all I propose is, to direct you to the far more profitable and Christian employment of shaming ourselves out of these very errors, that we may know how to judge of others, and that we may do it with the tenderness of charity.

First, then, it is said of Papists that they ascribe an infallibility to the Pope, so that if he were to say one thing and the Bible another, his authority would carry it over the authority of God. And, think you, my brethren, that there is no such Popery among you? Is there no taking of your religion upon trust from another, when you should draw it fresh and unsullied from the fountainhead of inspiration? You all have, or you ought to have, Bibles; and how often is it repeated there, "Hearken diligently unto me"? Now, do you obey this requirement, by making the reading of your Bibles a distinct and earnest exercise? Do you ever dare to bring your favourite minister to the tribunal of the word, or would you tremble at the presumption

of such an attempt, so that the hearing of the word carries a greater authority over your mind than the reading of the word? Now this want of daring, this trembling at the very idea of a dissent from your minister, this indolent acquiescence in his doctrine, is just calling another man master; it is putting the authority of man over the authority of God; it is throwing yourself into a prostrate attitude at the footstool of human infallibility; it is not just kissing the toe of reverence, but it is the profounder degradation of the mind and of all its faculties: and without the name of Popery—that name which lights up so ready an antipathy in your bosoms, your soul may be infected with the substantial poison, and your conscience be weighed down by the oppressive shackles of Popery. And all this, in the noon-day effulgence of a Protestant country, where the Bible, in your mother tongue, circulates among all your families—where it may be met with in almost every shelf, and is ever soliciting you to look to the wisdom that is inscribed upon its pages. Oh! how tenderly should we deal with the prejudices of a rude and uneducated people, who have no Bibles, and no art of reading among them to unlock its treasures, when we think that, even in this our land, the voice of human authority carries so mighty an influence along with it, and veneration for the word of God is darkened and polluted by a blind veneration for its interpreters.

We tremble to read of the fulminations that have issued in other days from a conclave of cardinals. Have we no conclaves, and no fulminations, and no orders of inquisition, in our own country? Is there no professing brotherhood, or no professing sisterhood, to deal their censorious invectives around them, upon the members of an excommunicated world? There is such a thing as a religious public. There is a "little flock," on the one hand, and a "world lying in wickedness," on the other. But have a care, ye who think yourselves of the favoured few, how you never transgress the mildness, and charity, and unostentatious virtues of the gospel; lest you hold out a distorted picture of Christianity in your neighbourhood, and impose that as religion on the fancy of the credulous, which stands at as wide a distance from the religion of the New Testament, as do the services of an exploded superstition, or the mummeries of an antiquated ritual.

But, again, it is said of Papists, that they hold the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation. Now a doctrine may be monstrous on two grounds. It may be monstrous on the ground of its

absurdity, or it may be monstrous on the ground of its impiety. It must have a most practically mischievous effect on the conscience, should a communicant sit down at the table of the Lord, and think that the act of appointed remembrance is equivalent to a real sacrifice, and a real expiation; and leave the performance with a mind unburdened of all its past guilt, and resolved to incur fresh guilt to be wiped away by a fresh expiation. But in the sacraments of our own country, is there no crucifying of the Lord afresh? Is there none of that which gives the doctrine of transubstantiation all its malignant influence on the hearts and lives of its proselytes? Is there no mysterious virtue annexed to the elements of this ordinance? Instead of being repaired to for the purpose of recruiting our languid affections to the Saviour, and strengthening our faith, and arming us with a firmer resolution, and more vigorous purpose of obedience, does the conscience of no communicant solace itself by the mere performance of the outward act, and suffer him to go back with a more reposing security to the follies, and vices, and indulgences of the world? Then, my brethren, his erroneous view of the sacrament may not be clothed in a term so appalling to the hearts and the feelings of Protestants as transubstantiation, but to it belongs all the immorality of transubstantiation; and the thorn must be pulled out of his eye, ere he can see clearly to cast the mote out of his brother's eye.

But, thirdly, it is said that Papists worship saints, and fall down to graven images. This is very, very bad. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." But let us take ourselves to task upon this charge also. Have we no consecrated names in the annals of reformation—no worthies who hold too commanding a place in the remembrance and affection of Protestants? Are there no departed theologians whose works hold too domineering an ascendancy over the faith and practice of Christians? Are there no laborious compilations of other days, which, instead of interpreting the Bible, have given its truths a shape, and a form, and an arrangement, that confer upon them another impression, and impart to them another influence, from the pure and original record? We may not bend the knee in any sensible chamber of imagery, at the remembrance of favourite saints. But do we not bend the understanding before the volumes of favourite authors, and do an homage to those representations of the minds of the men of other days, which should be exclusively given to the representation of the mind of



the Spirit, as put down in the book of the Spirit's revelation? It is right that each of us should give the contribution of his own talents, and his own learning, to this most interesting cause; but let the great drift of our argument be to prop the authority of the Bible, and to turn the eye of earnestness upon its pages; for if any work, instead of exalting the Bible, shall be made, by the misjudging reverence of others, to stand in its place, then we introduce a false worship into the heart of a reformed country, and lay prostrate the conscience of men, under the yoke of a spurious authority.

But fourthly and lastly—for time does not permit such an enumeration as would exhaust all the leading peculiarities ascribed to this faith—it is stated, that by the form of a confession, in the last days of a sinner's life, and the ministration of extreme unction upon his deathbed, he may be sent securely to another world, with all the unrepented profligacy, and fraud, and wickedness of this world upon his forehead; that this is looked forward to and counted upon by every Catholic—and sets him loose from all those anticipations which work upon the terror of other men—and throws open to him an unbridled career, through the whole of which he may wanton in all the varieties of criminal indulgence—and at length, when death knocks at his door, if he just allow him time to send for his minister, and to hurry along with him through the steps of an adjusted ceremonial, the man's passage through that dark vale which carries him out of the world is strewed with the promises of delusion—that every painful remembrance of the past is stifled amid the splendours and the juggleries of an imposing ritual; and in place of conscience rising upon him, and charging him with the guilty track of disobedience he has run, and forcing him to flee, amid the agitations of his restless bed, to the blood of the great Atonement, and alarming him into an earnest cry for the clean heart and the right spirit; knowing that unless he be born again unto repentance he shall perish;—why, my brethren, instead of these salutary exercises we are told that a fictitious hope is made to pour its treacherous sunshine into the bosom of a deceived Catholic—that, when standing on the verge of eternity, he can cast a fearless eye over its dark and untravelled vastness—and that, for the terror of its coming wrath, his guilty and unrenewed soul is filled with all the radiance and all the elevation of its anticipated glories.

Oh, my brethren, it is piteous to think of such a preparation,

but it is just such a preparation as meets the sad experience of us all. The man whose every affection has clung to the world till the last hour of his possibility to enjoy it; who never put forth an effort or a prayer to be delivered from the power of sin, till every faculty for its pleasures had expired; who, through the varied progress of his tastes and his desires, from amusement to dissipation, and from dissipation to business, had always a something in all the successive stages of his career, to take up his heart to the exclusion of Him who formed it;—why, such a man who never thought of pressing the lessons of the minister upon his conscience, while life was vigorous, and the full swing of its delights and occupations could be indulged in—do we never find, even in the bosom of this reformed country, that while his body retains all its health, his spirit retains all its hardihood; and not till the arrival of that week, or that month, or that year, when the last messenger begins to alarm him, does he think of sending to the man of God, a humble supplicant for his attendant prayers. Ah, my brethren, do you not think amid the tones, and the sympathies, and the tears which an affectionate pastor pours out in the fervency of his soul, and mingles with all his petitions, and all his addresses to the dying man, that no flattering unction ever steals upon him to lull his conscience, and smooth the agony of his departure? Then, my brethren, you mistake it, you sadly mistake it; and even here, where I lift my voice among a crowd of men, in the prime and unbroken vigour of their days—if even the youngest and likeliest of you all shall, trusting to some future repentance, cherish the purpose of sin another hour, and not resolve at this critical and important Now, to break it all off by an act of firm abandonment, then be your abhorrence of Popery what it may, you are exemplifying the worst of its errors, and wrapping yourselves up in the cruellest and most inveterate of its delusions.

I have left myself very little time for the application of all this to the particular objects of our Society. First, Let it correct the very gross and vulgar tendency we all have to think that the kingdom of God cometh with observation. That kingdom has its seat within us, and consists in the reign of principle over the hidden and invisible mind. The mere deposition of the Pope from that throne where he sits surrounded with the splendour of temporalities—the mere ascendancy of Protestant princes, over the counsels and politics of the world—the mere exclusion of Catholic subjects from our administrations and our

Parliaments—these things are all very observable, but they may all happen without one inch of progress being made towards the establishment of that kingdom which cometh not with observation. Why, my brethren, the supposition may be a very odd one, nor do I say that it is at all likely to be realized—but for the sake of illustration I will come forward with it. Conceive that the Spirit of God, accompanying the circulation of the word of God, were to introduce all its truths and all its lessons into the heart of every individual of the Catholic priesthood; and that the Pope himself, instead of being brought down in person from the secular eminence he occupies, were brought down in spirit, with all his lofty imaginations, to the captivity of the obedience of Christ—then I am not prepared to assert, that under the influence of this great Christian episcopacy a mighty advancement may not be made in building up the kingdom of God, and in throwing down the kingdom of Satan throughout all the territories of Catholic Christendom. And yet with all this the name of Catholic may be retained—the external and visible marks of distinction may be as prominent as ever—and with all those insignia about them which keep up our passionate antipathy to this denomination, there might not be a single ingredient in the spirit of its members to merit our rational antipathy. I beg you will just take all this as an attempt at the illustration of what I count a very important principle;—and, to make the illustration more complete, let me take up the case of a Protestant country, and put the supposition, that, with the name of a pure and spiritual religion, the majority of its inhabitants are utter strangers to its power; that an indifference to the matters of faith and of eternity works all the effect of a deep and fatal infidelity on their consciences; that the world engrosses every heart, and the kingdom which is not of this world is virtually disowned and held in derision among the various classes and characters of society; that the spirit of the New Testament is banished from our Parliaments, and banished from our Universities, and banished from the great bulk of our ecclesiastical establishments, and is only to be met with among a few inconsiderable men, who are scouted by the general voice as the fanatics and visionaries of the day;—then, my brethren, I am not to be charmed out of truth and of principle by the mockery of a name. Call such a country reformed as you may, it is full of the strong-holds of Antichrist, from one end to the other of it; and there must be a revolution of sentiment there, as well as

in the darkest regions of Popery, ere the "enemies of the Son of God be consumed by the breath of his mouth," or "Babylon the Great be fallen."

Now, secondly, mark the influence of such a train of sentiment on the spirit of those who are employed in spreading the light of reformation among a Catholic people. It will purify their aim and give it a judicious direction, and chase away from their proceedings that offensive tone of arrogance which is calculated to irritate and to beget a more determined obstinacy of prejudice than ever. Their great aim, to express it in one word, is to plant in the hearts of all men of all countries the religion of the Bible. Their great direction will be toward the establishment of right principle; and in the prosecution of it they will carefully avoid multiplying the points of irritation, by giving vent to their traditional repugnance against the less material forms of Popery. And the meek consciousness of that woful departure from vital Christianity which has taken place even in the reformed countries of Christendom, will divest them of that repulsive superiority which, I fear, has gone far to defeat the success of many an attempt upon many an enemy of the truth as it is in Jesus. "The whole amount of our message is to furnish you with the Bible, and to furnish you with the art of reading it. We think the lessons of this book well fitted to chase away the manifold errors which rankle in the bosom of our own country. You are the subjects of error as well as we; and we trust that you will find them useful in enlightening the prejudices and in aiding the frailties to which, as the children of one common humanity, we are all liable. Amongst us there is a mighty deference to the authority of man: if this exist among you, here is a book which tells us to call no man master, and delivers us from the fallibility of human opinions. Amongst us there is a delusive confidence in the forms of godliness with little of its power: here is a book which tells us that holiness of life is the great end of all our ceremonies and of all our sacraments. Amongst us there is a host of theologians, each wielding his separate authority over the creed and the conscience of his countrymen, and you, Catholics, have justly reproached us with our manifold and never-ending varieties; but here is a book the influence of which is throwing all these differences into the background, and bringing forward those great and substantial points of agreement which lead us to recognise the man of another creed to be essentially a Christian—and we want to widen

this circle of fellowship, that we may be permitted to live in the exercise of one faith and of one charity along with you. Amongst us the great bulk of men pass through life forgetful of eternity, and think that by the sighs and the ministrations of their last days, they will earn all the blessedness of its ever-during rewards: but here is a book which tells us that we should seek first the kingdom of God; and will not let us off with any other repentance than repentance now; and tells us what we trust will light with greater energy on your consciences than it has ever done upon ours, that we should haste and make no delay to keep the commandments." Oh, my brethren, let us not despair that such arguments, urged by the mild charity which adorns the Bible, and followed up by its circulation, will at length tell on the firmest defences that bigotry ever raised around the conscience and the principles of men—and that out of those jarring elements which threaten our empire with a wild war of turbulence and disorder, we shall by the blessing of God be enabled to cement all its members into one great and harmonious family.

I conclude with saying, that, mainly and substantially speaking, I conceive this to be the very spirit of the attempt that is now making by the Society I am now pleading for. It is not an offensive declaration of war against Popery. It is true that it may be looked upon virtually as a measure of hostility against the errors of Catholics, but no more than it is a measure of hostility against the errors of Protestants. The light of truth is fitted to chase away all error, and there is something in that Bible which the agents of our Society are now teaching so assiduously, that is not more humbling and more severe on the general spirit of Ireland, than it is on the general spirit of our own country. It is true, that some of the Catholics set their face against the establishment of our schools, but this resistance to education is not peculiar to them. It is to be met with in England. It is to be met with in our own boasted and beloved Scotland. It is to be met with even among the enlightened classes of British society—and shall we speak of it as if it fastened a peculiar stigma on that country, which we have left to languish in depression and ignorance for so many generations? But this resistance on the part of Catholics is far from general. In one district the teachers of our schools are chiefly Roman Catholics; many of the school-houses are Catholic chapels; and the great majority of the scholars are children of Catholic

parents, who have appeared not a little elated that their children have proved more expert in their Scriptural quotations than their neighbours.—Call you not this an auspicious commencement? Is there no loosening of prejudice here? Do you not perceive that the firmest system of bigotry, ever erected over the minds of a prostrate population, must give way before the continued operation of such an expedient as this? There is no one device of human policy that has done so much for Ireland in a whole century, as is now doing by the progress of education, and the freer circulation of the gospel of light through the dark mass and interior of their peasantry. Let me crave the assistance of the public in this place to one of the most powerful instruments that has yet been set agoing for helping forward this animating cause. It is an instrument ready-made to your hand. The Hibernian Society have already established 347 schools in our sister country—a number equal to one-third of the parishes in Scotland; and they are dealing out education, a pure Scriptural education, to 27,700 Irish children. It will be a disgrace to us if we do not signalize ourselves in such a business as this. We talk of the Irish as a wild and uncivilised people. It will be the indication of a very gross and uncivilised public at home, if we restrict our interchange with the men of the opposite shore to the one interchange of merchandise. Let the rudeness of the Irish be what it may, sure I am that there is much in their constitutional character to encourage us in this enterprise. They have many good points and engaging properties about them. I speak not of that peculiar style of genius and of eloquence, which gives such fascination to the poets, the authors, the orators of Ireland. I speak of the great mass, and I do think that I perceive a something in the natural character of Ireland, which draws me more attractively to the love of its people, than any other picture of national manners ever has inspired. Even amid the wildest extravagance of that humour which sits so visibly and so universally on the countenance of the Irish population, I can see a heart and a social sympathy along with it. Amid all the wayward and ungovernable flights of that rare pleasantry which belongs to them, there is a something by which the bosom of an Irishman can be seriously and permanently affected, and which I think, in judicious hands, is convertible into the finest results on the ultimate character of that people. It strikes me that, of all the men on the face of the earth, they would be the worst fitted to withstand the ex-

pression of honest, frank, liberal, and persevering kindness ;— that if they saw there was no artful policy in the attentions by which you plied them, but that an upright and firmly sustained benevolence lay at the bottom of all your exertions for the best interest of their families ;—could they attain the conviction that, amid all the contempt and all the resistance you experienced from their hands, there still existed in your bosoms an unquelled and an undissembled love for them and for their children ;— could they see the working of this principle divested of every treacherous and suspicious symptom, and unwearied amid every discouragement in prosecuting the task of their substantial amelioration,—Why, my brethren, let all this come to be seen, and in a few years I trust our devoted missionaries will bring it before them broad and undeniable as the light of day, and those hearts that are now shut against you in sullenness and disdain will be subdued into tenderness ; the strong emotions of gratitude and nature will at length find their way through all the barriers of prejudice ; and a people whom no penalties could turn, whom no terror of military violence could overcome, who kept on a scowling front of hostility that was not to be softened, while war spread its desolating cruelties over their unhappy land—this very people will do homage to the omnipotence of charity, and when the mighty armour of Christian kindness is brought to bear upon them, it will be found to be irresistible.

## SERMON VIII.

(Preached in Edinburgh, March 5, 1826.)

## ON CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

“A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.”—PROVERBS xii. 10.

THE word “regard” is of twofold signification, and may either apply to the moral or to the intellectual part of our nature. In the one application, the intellectual, it is the regard of attention. In the other, the moral, it is the regard of sympathy or kindness. We do not marvel at this common term having been applied to two different things; for, in truth, they are most intimately associated; and the faculty by which a transition is accomplished from the one to the other, may be considered as the intermediate link between the mind and the heart. It is the faculty by which certain objects become present to the mind; and then the emotions are awakened in the heart, which correspond to these objects. The two act and react upon each other. But, as we must not dwell too long on generalities, we shall satisfy ourselves with stating—that, as, on the one hand, if the heart be very alive to any peculiar set of emotions, this of itself is a predisposing cause why the mind should be very alert in singling out the peculiar objects which excite them; so, on the other hand, that the emotions be specifically felt, the objects must be specifically noticed; and thus it is that the faculty of attention—a faculty at the bidding of the will, and for the exercise of which therefore man is responsible—is of such mighty and commanding influence upon the sensibilities of our nature; insomuch that, if the regard of attention could be fastened strongly and *singly* on the pain of a suffering creature as its object, we believe that no other emotion than the regard of sympathy or compassion would in any instance be awakened by it.

So much is this indeed the case—so sure is this alliance between the mind simply noticing the distress of a sentient creature, and the heart being sympathetically affected by it, that



Nature seems to have limited and circumscribed our power of noticing, and just for the purpose of shielding us from the pain of too pungent or too incessant a sympathy. And accordingly, one of the exquisite adaptations in the mechanism of the human frame may be observed in the very imperfection of the human faculties. The most frequently adduced example of this, is the limited power of that organ which is the instrument of vision. The imagination is, that, did man look out upon nature with microscopic eye, so that many of those wonders which now lie hid in deep obscurity should henceforth start into open revelation, and be hourly and habitually obtruded upon his gaze, then, with his present sensibilities exposed to the torture and the disturbance of a perpetual and most agonizing offence from all possible quarters of contemplation, he would be utterly incapacitated for the movements of familiar and ordinary life. Did he actually see, for example, in the beverage which he carried to his lips, that teeming multitude of sentient and susceptible creatures wherewith it is pervaded: or if it were alike palpable to his senses, that, by the crush of every footstep, he inflicted upon thousands the pangs of dissolution, then it is apprehended that, to man as he is, the world would be insupportable. For, beside the irritation of that sore and incessant disgust from which the power of escaping was denied to him, there would be another, and a most intense suffering, in the constantly aggrieved tenderness of his nature. Or if, by the operation of habit, all these sensibilities were blunted, and he could behold unmoved the ruin and the wretchedness that he strewed along his path, then he might attain to comfort in the midst of this surrounding annoyance; but what would become of character in the utter extinction of all the delicacies and the feelings which went to adorn it? Such a change in his physical, could only be adjusted to his happiness, by a reverse and most melancholy change in the moral constitution of his nature. The fineness of his bodily perceptions would need to be compensated by a proportional hardness in the temperament of his soul. With his now finer sensations, there behoved to be duller and coarser sensibilities; and to assort that eye, whose retina had become tenfold more soft and susceptible than before, its owner must be furnished with a heart of tenfold rigidity, and a nervous system impregnable as iron—that he might walk forth in ease and in complacency, while the conscious destroyer of millions by his tread, or the conscious devourer of a whole living and suffering

hecatomb with every morsel of the sustenance which upheld him.

But, for the purpose of a nice and delicate balance between the actual feelings and faculties of our nature, something more is necessary than the imperfection of our outward senses. The blunting of man's visual organs serves, no doubt, as a screen of protection against both the nausea and the horror of those many spectacles, which would else have either distressed or deteriorated the sensibilities that belong to him. But then, by help of the microscope, this screen can be occasionally lifted up; and what the eye then saw, the memory might retain, and the imagination might dwell upon, and the associating faculty might both constantly and vividly suggest; and thus, even in the absence of every provocative from without, the heart might be subjected either to a perpetual agitation, or a perpetual annoyance, by the meddling importunity of certain powers and activities which are within. It is not therefore an adequate defence of our species, against a very sore and hurtful molestation, that there should be a certain physical incapacity in our senses. There must, furthermore, be a certain physical inertness in our reflective faculties. In virtue of the former it is, that so many painful or disgusting objects are kept out of sight. But it seems indispensable to our happy or even tolerable existence, that, in virtue of the latter, these objects, when out of sight, should be also out of mind. In the one way, they lose their power to offend as objects of outward observation. In the other way, their power to haunt and to harass by means of inward reflection, is also taken away. For the first purpose, Nature has struck with a certain impotency the organs of our material framework. For the second, she has infused, as it were, an opiate into the recesses of our mental economy; and made it of sufficient strength and sedative virtue for the needful tranquillity of man, and for upholding that average enjoyment in the midst both of agony and of loathsomeness, which either senses more acute, or a spirit more wakeful, must have effectually dissipated. It is to some such provision too, we think, that much of the heart's purity, as well as much of its tenderness is owing; and it is well that the thoughts of the spirit should be kept, though even by the weight of its own lethargy, from too busy converse with objects which are alike offensive or alike hazardous to both.

It is more properly with the second of these adaptations than the first, that our argument has to do—with the inertness of our

reflective faculties, rather than with the incapacity of our senses. It is in behalf of animals, and not of animalculæ, that we are called upon to address you—not of that countless swarm, the agonies of whose destruction are shrouded from observation by the veil upon the sight; but of those creatures who move on the face of the open perspective before us, and not as the others in a region of invisibles, and yet whose dying agonies are shrouded almost as darkly and as densely from general observation by the veil upon the mind. For you will perceive, that in reference to the latter veil, and by which it is that what is out of sight is also out of mind, its purpose is accomplished, whether the objects which are disguised by it be without the sphere of actual vision, or beneath the surface of possible vision. Now, it is without the sphere of your actual, although not beneath the surface of your possible vision, where are transacted the dreadful mysteries of a slaughter-house; and more especially those lingering deaths which many an animal has to undergo for the gratifications of a refined epicurism. It were surely most desirable that the duties, if they may be so called, of a most revolting trade, were all of them got over with the least possible expense of suffering: Nor do we ever feel so painfully the impression of a lurking cannibalism in our nature, as when we think of the intense study which has been given to the connexion between modes of killing; and the flavour or delicacy of those viands, which are served up to the mild and pacific and gentle-looking creatures, who form the grace and the ornament of our polished society. One is almost tempted, after all, to look upon them as so many savages in disguise; and so, in truth, we should, but for the strength of that opiate whose power and whose property we have just endeavoured to explain; and in virtue of which, the guests of an entertainment are all the while most profoundly unconscious of the horrors of that preparatory scene which went before it. It is not therefore that there is hypocrisy in these smiles wherewith they look so benignly to each other. It is not that there is deceit in their words or their accents of tenderness. The truth is, that one shriek of agony, if heard from without, would cast most oppressive gloom over this scene of conviviality; and the sight, but for a moment, of one wretched creature quivering towards death, would, with Gorgon spell, dissipate all the gaieties which enlivened it. But Nature, as it were, hath practised most subtle *reticence*, both on the senses and the spirit of us her children; or rather, the Author of

Nature hath, by the skill of His master hand, instituted the harmony of a most exquisite balance between the tenderness of the human feelings and the listlessness of the human faculties—so as that, in the mysterious economy under which we live, He may at once provide for the sustenance, and leave entire the moral sensibilities of our species.

But there is a still more wondrous limitation than this, where-with He hath bounded and beset the faculties of the human spirit. You already understand how it is that the sufferings of the lower animals may, when out of sight, be out of mind. But more than this, these sufferings may be in sight, and yet out of mind. This is strikingly exemplified in the sports of the field, in the midst of whose varied and animating bustle, that cruelty which all along is present to the senses, may not, for one moment, have been present to the thoughts. There sits a somewhat ancestral dignity and glory on this favourite pastime of joyous old England; when the gallant knighthood, and the hearty yeomen, and the amateurs or virtuosos of the chase, and the full assembled jockeyship of half a province, muster together in all the pride and pageantry of their great emprise; and the panorama of some noble landscape, lighted up with autumnal clearness from an unclouded heaven, pours fresh exhilaration into every blithe and choice spirit of the scene; and every adventurous heart is braced, and impatient for the hazards of the coming enterprise; and even the high-breathed coursers catch the general sympathy, and seem to fret in all the restiveness of their yet checked and irritated fire, till the echoing horn shall set them at liberty—even that horn which is the knell of death to some trembling victim, now brought forth of its lurking-place to the delighted gaze, and borne down upon with the full and open cry of its ruthless pursuers. Be assured that, amid the whole glee and fervency of this tumultuous enjoyment, there might not, in one single bosom, be aught so fiendish as a principle of naked and abstract cruelty. The fear which gives its lightning-speed to the unhappy animal; the thickening horrors which, in the progress of exhaustion, must gather upon its flight; its gradually sinking energies, and, at length, the terrible certainty of that destruction which is awaiting it; that piteous cry, which the ear can sometimes distinguish amid the deafening clamour of the blood-hounds, as they spring exultingly upon their prey; the dread massacre and dying agonies of a creature so miserably torn;—all this weight of suffering, we admit, is not

once sympathized with ; but it is just because the suffering itself is not once thought of. It touches not the sensibilities of the heart ; but just because it is never present to the notice of the mind. We allow that the hardy followers in the wild romance of this occupation, we allow them to be reckless of pain ; but this is not rejoicing in pain. Theirs is not the delight of savage, but the apathy of unreflecting creatures. They are wholly occupied with the chase itself, and its spirit-stirring accompaniments ; nor bestow one moment's thought on the dread violence of that infliction upon sentient nature which marks its termination. It is the spirit of the competition, and it alone, which goads onward this hurrying career ; and even he who, in at the death, is foremost in the triumph—although to him the death itself is in sight, the agony of its wretched sufferer is wholly out of mind.

We are inclined to carry this principle much farther. We are not even sure, if, within the whole compass of humanity, fallen as it is, there be such a thing as delight in suffering for its own sake. But, without hazarding a controversy on this, we hold it enough for every practical object, that much, and perhaps the whole of this world's cruelty, arises not from the enjoyment that is felt in consequence of others' pain, but from the enjoyment that is felt in spite of it. It is something else in the spectacle of agony which ministers pleasure than the agony itself ; and many is the eye which glistens with transport at the fray of animals met together for their mutual destruction, and which might be brought to weep, if, apart from all the excitements of such a scene, the anguish of wounded or dying creatures were placed nakedly before it. Were it strictly analysed, it would be found that the charm neither of the ancient gladiatorships, nor of our modern prize-fights, lies in the torture which is thereby inflicted ; for we should feel the very same charm, and look with the very same intentness on some doubtful yet strenuous collision, even among the inanimate elements of nature—as when the water and the fire contended for mastery, and the inherent force of the one was met by a plying and a powerful enginery that gave impulse and direction to the other. It is even so when the enginery of bones and of muscles comes into rivalry ; and every spectator of the ring fastens on the spectacle with that identical engrossment which he feels in the hazards of some doubtful game, or in the desperate conflict and effervescence even of the altogether mute unconscious elements.

To him it is little else than a problem in dynamics. There is a science connected with the fight, which has displaced the sensibilities that are connected with its expiring moans, its piteous and piercing outcries, its cruel lacerations. In all this, we admit the utter heedlessness of pain ; but we are not sure if even yet there be aught so hellishly revolting as any positive gratification in the pain itself—or whether, even in the lowest walks of blackguardism in society, it do not also hold, that when sufferings even unto death are fully in sight, the pain of these sufferings is as fully out of mind.

But the term “science,” so strangely applied as it has been in the example now quoted, reminds us of another variety in this most afflicting detail. Even in the purely academic walk we read or hear of the most appalling cruelties ; and the interest of that philosophy wherewith they have been associated, has been pleaded in mitigation of them. And just as the moral debasement incurred by an act of theft is somewhat redeemed if done by one of Science’s enamoured worshippers, when, overcome by the mere passion of connoisseurship, he puts forth his hand on some choice specimen of most tempting and irresistible peculiarity—even so has a like indulgence been extended to certain perpetrators of stoutest and most resolved cruelty ; and that just because of the halo wherewith the glories of intellect and of proud discovery have enshrined them. And thus it is, that bent on the scrutiny of nature’s laws, there are some of our race who have hardihood enough to explore and elicit them at the expense of dreadest suffering—who can make some quaking, some quivering animal, the subject of their hapless experiment—who can institute a questioning process by which to draw out the secrets of its constitution, and, like inquisitors of old, extract every reply by an instrument of torture—who can probe their unflinching way among the vitalities of a system which shrinks, and palpitates, and gives forth at every movement of their steadfast hand, the pulsations of deepest agony ; and all, perhaps, to ascertain and to classify the phenomena of sensation, or to measure the tenacity of animal life by the power and exquiriteness of animal endurance. And still it is not because of all this wretchedness, but in spite of it, that they pursue their barbarous occupation. Even here it is possible that there is nought so absolutely Satanic as delight in those sufferings of which themselves are the inflictors. That law of emotion by which the sight of pain calls forth sympathy may not be reversed into an

opposite law, by which the sight of pain would call forth satisfaction or pleasure. The emotion is not reversed—it is only overborne in the play of other emotions called forth by other objects. He is intent on the science of those phenomena which he investigates, and bethinks not himself of the suffering which they involve to the unhappy animal. So far from the sympathies of his nature being reversed or even annihilated, there is in most cases an effort, and of great strenuousness, to keep them down; and his heart is differently affected from that of other men, just because the regards of his mental eye are differently pointed from those of other men. The whole bent and engagement of his faculties are similar to those of another operator who is busied with the treatment of a piece of inanimate matter, and may almost be said to subject it to the torture, when he puts it in the intensely-heated crucible, or applies to it the tests and the various searching operations of a laboratory. The one watches every change of hue in the substance upon which he operates, and waits for the response which is given forth by a spark, or an effervescence, or an explosion; and the other, precisely similar to him, watches every change of aspect in the suffering or dying creature that is before him, and marks every symptom of its exhaustion or sorer distress, every throb of renewed anguish, every cry, and every look of that pain which it can feel, through not articulate; marks and considers these in no other light than as the exponents of its variously-affected physiology. But still, could merely the same interesting phenomena have been evolved without pain, he would like it better. Only he will not be repelled from the study of them by pain. Even he would have had more comfort in the study of a complex automaton, that gave out the same results on the same application. Only he will not shrink from the necessary incisions and openings, and separation of parts, although, instead of a lifeless automaton, it should be a sentient and sorely-agonized animal. So that there is not even with him any reversal of the law of sympathy. There may be the feebleness, or there may be the negation of it. Certain it is, that it has given way to other laws of superior force in his constitution. And, without imputing to him aught so monstrous as the positive love of suffering, we may even admit for him a hatred of suffering, but that the love of science had overborne it.

In the views that we have now given, and which we deem of

advantage for the right practical treatment of our question, it may be conceived that we palliate the atrociousness of cruelty. It is forgotten that a charge of foulest delinquency may be made up altogether of wants or of negatives; and, just as the human face by the mere want of some of its features, although there should not be any inversion of them, might be an object of utter loathsomeness to beholders, so the human character by the mere absence of certain habits or certain sensibilities, which belong ordinarily and constitutionally to our species, may be an object of utter abomination in society. The want of natural affection forms one article of the apostle's indictment against our world; and certain it is, that the total want of it were stigma enough for the designation of a monster. The mere want of religion, or irreligion, is enough to make man an outcast from his God. Even to the most barbarous of our kind you apply, not the term of anti-humanity, but of inhumanity—not the term of anti-sensibility; and you hold it enough for the purpose of branding him for general execration, that you convicted him of complete and total insensibility. He is regaled, it is true, by a spectacle of agony—but not because of the agony. It is something else, therewith associated, which regales him. But still he is rightfully the subject of most emphatic denunciation, not because regaled by, but because regardless of, the agony. We do not feel ourselves to be vindicating the cruel man, when we affirm it to be not altogether certain whether he rejoices in the extinction of life; for we count it a deep atrocity that, unlike to the righteous man of our text, he simply does not regard the life of a beast. You may perhaps have been accustomed to look upon the negatives of character as making up a sort of neutral or mid-way innocence. But this is a mistake. Unfeeling is but a negative quality; and yet we speak of an unfeeling monster. It is thus that even the profound experimentalist, whose delight is not in the torture which he inflicts, but in the truth which he elicits thereby, may become an object of keenest reprobation; not because he was pleased with suffering, but simply because he did not pity it—not because the object of pain, if dwelt upon by him, would be followed up by any other emotion than that which is experienced by other men; but because, intent on the prosecution of another object, it was not so dwelt upon. It is found that the *éclat* even of brilliant discovery does not shield him from the execrations of a public, who can yet convict him of nothing more than simply of negatives—of heedlessness, of



heartlessness, of looking upon the agonies of a sentient creature without regard, and therefore without sensibility. The true principle of his condemnation is, that he ought to have regarded. It is not that, in virtue of a different organic structure, he feels differently from others when the same simple object is brought to bear upon him. But it is that he resolutely kept that object at a distance from his attention, or rather that he steadily kept his attention away from the object; and that in opposition to all the weight of remonstrance which lies in the tremors and the writhings and the piteous outcries of agonized nature. Had we obtained for these the regards of his mind, the relentings of his heart might have followed. His is not an anomalous heart; and the only way in which he can brace it into sternness is by barricading the avenue which leads to it. That faculty of attention which might have opened the door through which suffering without finds its way to sympathy within is otherwise engaged; and the precise charge on which either morality can rightfully condemn or humanity be offended, is that he wills to have it so.

It may be illustrated by that competition of speed which is held, with busy appliance of whip and of spur, betwixt animals. A similar competition can be imagined between steam-carriages, when, either to preserve the distance which has been gained, or to recover the distance which has been lost, the respective guides would keep up an incessant appliance to the furnace and the safety-valve. Now, the sport and the excitement are the same, whether this appliance of force be to a dead or a living mechanism; and the enormity of the latter does not lie in any direct pleasure which is felt in the exhaustion or the soreness, or, finally, in the death of the over-driven animal. If these awake any feeling at all in the barbarous rider, it is that of pain; and it is either the want or the weakness of this latter feeling, and not the presence of its opposite, which constitutes him a barbarian. He does not rejoice in animal suffering—but it is enough to bring down upon him the charge of barbarity that he does not regard it.

But these introductory remarks, although they lead, I do think, to some most important suggestions for the management of the evil, yet they serve not to abate its appalling magnitude. Man is the direct agent of a wide and continual distress to the lower animals, and the question is, Can any method be devised for its alleviation? On this subject that scriptural image is

strikingly realized, "The whole inferior creation groaning and travailing together in pain," because of him. It signifies not to the substantive amount of the suffering, whether this be prompted by the hardness of his heart, or only permitted through the heedlessness of his mind. In either way it holds true, not only that the arch-devourer man stands pre-eminent over the fiercest children of the wilderness as an animal of prey; but that for his lordly and luxurious appetite, as well as for his service or merest curiosity and amusement, Nature must be ransacked throughout all her elements. Rather than forego the veriest gratifications of vanity, he will wring them from the anguish of wretched and ill-fated creatures; and whether for the indulgence of his barbaric sensuality, or barbaric splendour, can stalk paramount over the sufferings of that prostrate creation which has been placed beneath his feet. That beauteous domain whereof he has been constituted the terrestrial sovereign, gives out so many blissful and benignant aspects; and whether we look to its peaceful lakes, or its flowery landscapes, or its evening skies, or to all that soft attire which overspreads the hills and the valleys, lighted up by smiles of sweetest sunshine, and where animals disport themselves in all the exuberance of gaiety—this surely were a more befitting scene for the rule of clemency, than for the iron rod of a murderous and remorseless tyrant. But the present is a mysterious world wherein we dwell. It still bears much upon its materialism of the impress of Paradise. But a breath from the air of Pandemonium has gone over its living generations. And so "the fear of man, and the dread of man, is now upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into man's hands are they delivered: every moving thing that liveth is meat for him; yea, even as the green herbs, there have been given to him all things." Such is the extent of his jurisdiction, and with most full and wanton licence has he revelled among its privileges. The whole earth labours and is in violence because of his cruelties; and from the amphitheatre of sentient Nature, there sounds in fancy's ear the bleat of one wide and universal suffering,—a dreadful homage to the power of Nature's constituted lord.

These sufferings are really felt. The beasts of the field are not so many automata without sensation, and just so constructed as to give forth all the natural signs and expressions of it. Nature hath not practised this universal deception upon our

species. These poor animals just look, and tremble, and give forth the very indications of suffering that we do. Theirs is the distinct cry of pain. Theirs is the unequivocal physiognomy of pain. They put on the same aspect of terror on the demonstrations of a menaced blow. They exhibit the same distortions of agony after the infliction of it. The bruise, or the burn, or the fracture, or the deep incision, or the fierce encounter with one of equal or superior strength, just affects them similarly to ourselves. Their blood circulates as ours. They have pulsations in various parts of the body like ours. They sicken, and they grow feeble with age; and finally, they die just as we do. They possess the same feelings; and, what exposes them to like suffering from another quarter, they possess the same instincts with our own species. The lioness robbed of her whelps causes the wilderness to ring aloud with the proclamation of her wrongs; or the bird whose little household has been stolen, fills and saddens all the grove with melodies of deepest pathos. All this is palpable even to the general and unlearned eye; and when the physiologist lays open the recesses of their system by means of that scalpel, under whose operation they just shrink and are convulsed as any living subject of our own species, there stands forth to view the same sentient apparatus, and furnished with the same conductors for the transmission of feeling to every minutest pore upon the surface. Theirs is unmixed and unmitigated pain—the agonies of martyrdom, without the alleviation of the hopes and the sentiments, whereof they are incapable. When they lay them down to die, their only fellowship is with suffering; for in the prison-house of their beset and bounded faculties, there can no relief be afforded by communion with other interests or other things. The attention does not lighten their distress as it does that of man, by carrying off his spirit from that existing pungency and pressure which might else be overwhelming. There is but room in their mysterious economy for one inmate; and that is, the absorbing sense of their own single and concentrated anguish. And so in that bed of torment, whereon the wounded animal lingers and expires, there is an unexplored depth and intensity of suffering which the poor dumb animal itself cannot tell, and against which it can offer no remonstrance; an untold and unknown amount of wretchedness, of which no articulate voice gives utterance. But there is an eloquence in its silence; and the very shroud which disguises it, only serves to aggravate its horrors.

We now come to the practical treatment of this question—to

the right method of which, we hold the views that are now offered to be directly and obviously subservient.

First, then, upon this subject, we should hold no doubtful casuistry. We should advance no pragmatic or controversial doctrine. We should carefully abstain from all such ambiguous or questionable positions, as the unlawfulness of animal food, or the unlawfulness of animal experiments. We should not even deem it the right tactics for this moral warfare, to take up the position of the unlawfulness of field-sports; or yet the unlawfulness of those competitions, whether of strength or of speed, which at one time on the turf, and at another in the ring, are held forth to the view of assembled spectators. We are aware that some of these positions are not so questionable, yet we should refrain from the elaboration of them; for we hold, that this is not the way by which we shall most effectually make head against the existing cruelties of our land. The moral force by which our cause is to be advanced, does not lie even in the soundest categories of an ethical jurisprudence—and far less in the dogmata of any paltry sectarianism. We have almost as little inclination for the controversy which respects animal food, as we have for the controversy about the eating of blood; and this, we repeat, is not the way by which the claims of the inferior animals are practically to be carried.

To obtain the regards of man's heart in behalf of the lower animals, we should strive to draw the regards of his mind towards them. We should avail ourselves of the close alliance that obtains between the regards of his attention, and those of his sympathy. For this purpose, we should importunately ply him with the objects of suffering, and thus call up its respondent emotion of sympathy—that among the other objects which have hitherto engrossed his attention, and the other desires or emotions which have hitherto lorded it over the compassion of his nature and overpowered it; this last may at length be restored to its legitimate play, and reinstated in all its legitimate pre-eminence over the other affections or appetites which belong to him. It affords a hopeful view of our cause, that so much can be done by the mere obtrusive presentation of the object to the notice of society. It is a comfort to know, that, in this benevolent warfare, we have to make head, not so much against the cruelty of the public, as against the heedlessness of the public; that to hold forth a right view, is the way to call forth a right sensibility; and, that to assail the seat of any emotion, our like-

liest process is to make constant and conspicuous exhibition of the object which is fitted to awaken it. Our text, taken from the profoundest book of experimental wisdom in the world, keeps clear of every questionable or casuistical dogma; and rests the whole cause of the inferior animals on one moral element, which is, in respect of principle—and on one practical method, which is, in respect of efficacy—unquestionable: “A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.” Let a man be but righteous in the general and obvious sense of the word, and let the regard of his attention be but directed to the case of the inferior animals, and then the regard of his sympathy will be awakened to the full extent at which it is either duteous or desirable. Still it may be asked, to what extent will the duty go? and our reply is, that we had rather push the duty forward, than be called upon to define the extreme termination of it. Yet we do not hesitate to say, that we foresee not aught so very extreme as the abolition of animal food; but we do foresee the indefinite abridgment of all that cruelty which subserves the gratifications of a base and selfish epicurism. We think that a Christian and humanized society will at length lift their prevalent voice, for the least possible expense of suffering to all the victims of a necessary slaughter—for a business of utmost horror being also a business of utmost despatch—for the blow, in short, of an instant extermination, that not one moment might elapse between a state of pleasurable existence and a state of profound unconsciousness. Again, we do not foresee, but with the perfecting of the two sciences of anatomy and physiology, the abolition of animal experiments; but we do foresee a gradual, and, at length, a complete abandonment of the experiments of illustration, which are at present a thousand-fold more numerous than the experiments of humane discovery. As to field-sports, we, for the present, abstain from all prophecy, in regard, either to their growing disuse, or to the conclusive extinction of them. We are quite sure, in the meantime, that casuistry upon this subject would be altogether powerless; and nothing could be imagined more keenly, or more energetically contemptuous, than the impatient—the impetuous disdain, wherewith the enamoured votaries of this gay and glorious adventure would listen to any demonstration of its unlawfulness. We shall therefore make no attempt to dogmatize them out of that fond and favourite amusement which they prosecute with all the intensity of a passion. It is not thus that the fascination will be dissipated. And, therefore, for the

present, we should be inclined to subject the lovers of the chase, and the lovers of the prize-fight, to the same treatment, even as there exists between them, we are afraid, the affinity of a certain common or kindred character. There is, we have often thought, a kind of professional caste, a family likeness, by which the devotees of game, and of all sorts of stirring or hazardous enterprise, admit of being recognised; the hue of a certain assimilating quality, although of various gradations, from the noted champions of the hunt, to the noted champions of the ring or of the racing-course; a certain dash of moral outlawry, if I may use the expression, among all these children of high and heated adventure, that bespeaks them a distinct class in society—a set of wild and wayward humorists, who have broken them loose from the dull regularities of life, and formed themselves into so many trusty and sworn brotherhoods, wholly given over to frolic, and excitement, and excess, in all their varieties. They compose a separate and outstanding public among themselves, nearly arrayed in the same picturesque habiliments—bearing most distinctly upon their countenance the same air of recklessness and hardihood—admiring the same feats of dexterity or danger—indulging the same tastes, even to their very literature—members of the same sporting society—readers of the same sporting magazine, whose strange medley of anecdotes gives impressive exhibition of that one and pervading characteristic for which we are contending; anecdotes of the chase, and anecdotes of the high-breathed or bloody contest, and anecdotes of the gaming-table, and lastly anecdotes of the high-way. We do not just affirm a precise identity between all the specimens or species in this very peculiar department of moral history. But, to borrow a phrase from natural history, we affirm, that there are transition processes, by which the one melts, and demoralizes, and graduates insensibly into the other. What we have now to do with, is the cruelty of their respective entertainments—a cruelty, however, upon which we could not assert, even of the very worst and most worthless among them, that they rejoice in pain, but that they are regardless of pain. It is not by the force of a mere ethical *dictum*, in itself perhaps unquestionable, that they will be restrained from their pursuits. But when transformed by the operation of unquestionable principle, into righteous and regardful men, they will spontaneously abandon them. Meanwhile, we try to help forward our cause, by forcing upon general regard those sufferings which are now so unheeded and unthought of.

And we look forward to its final triumph, as one of those results that will historically ensue, in the train of an awakened and a moralized society.

The institution of a yearly sermon against cruelty to animals, is of itself a likely enough expedient, that might at least be of some auxiliary operation, along with other and more general causes, towards such an awakening. It is not by one, but by many successive appeals, that the cause of justice and mercy to the brute creation will at length be practically carried. On this subject I cannot, within the limits of a single address, pretend to aught like a full or a finished demonstration. This might require not one, but a whole century of sermons; and many therefore are the topics which necessarily I must bequeath to my successors, in this warfare against the listlessness and apathy of the public. And, beside the force and the impression of new topics, if there be any truth in our doctrine, there is a mighty advantage gained upon this subject of all others by the repetition of old topics. It is a subject on which the public do not require so much to be instructed, as to be reminded; to have the regard of their attention directed again and again to the sufferings of poor helpless creatures, that the regard of their sympathy might at length be effectually obtained for them. This then is a cause to which the institution of an anniversary pleading in its favour, is most precisely and peculiarly adapted. And besides, we must confess, in the general, our partiality for a scheme that has originated the Boyle, and the Bampton, and the Warburtonian lectureships of England, with all the valuable authorship which has proceeded from them. An endowment for an annual discourse upon a given theme, is, we believe, a novelty in Scotland; though it is to similar institutions that much of the best sacred and theological literature of our sister country is owing. We should rejoice, if, in this our comparatively meagre and unbefitted land, both these themes and these endowments were multiplied. We recommend this as a fit species of charity for the munificence of wealthy individuals. Whatever their selected argument shall be, whether that of cruelty to animals, or some one evidence of our faith, or the defence and illustration of a doctrine, or any distinct method of Christian philanthropy for the moral regeneration of our species, or aught else of those innumerable topics that lie situated within the rich ample domain of that revelation which God has made to our world—we feel assured that such a movement must be responded to with bene-

ficial effect, both by the gifted pastors of our Church, and by the aspiring youths of greatest power or greatest promise among its candidates. Such institutions as these would help to quicken the energies of our Establishment; and, through means of a sustained and reiterated effort, directed to some one great lesson, whether in theology or morals, they might impress, and that more deeply every year, some specific and most salutary amelioration on the principles or the practices of general society.

Yet we are loath to quit our subject without one appeal more in behalf of those poor sufferers, who, unable to advocate their own cause, possess, on that very account, a more imperative claim on the exertions of him who now stands as their advocate before you.

And first, it may have been felt that by the way in which we have attempted to resolve cruelty into its elements, we, instead of launching rebuke against it, have only devised a palliation for its gross and shocking enormity. But it is not so. It is true we count the enormity to lie mainly in the heedlessness of pain; but then we charge this foully and flagrantly enormous thing, not on the mere desperadoes and barbarians of our land, but on the men and the women of general and even of cultivated and high-bred society. Instead of stating cruelty to be what it is not, and then confining the imputation of it to the outcast few, we hold it better, and practically far more important, to state what cruelty really is, and then fasten the imputation of it on the commonplace and the companionable many. Those outcasts to whom you would restrict the condemnation are not at present within the reach of our voice. But you are; and it lies with you to confer a tenfold greater boon on the inferior creation, than if all barbarous sports and all bloody experiments were forthwith put an end to. It is at the bidding of your collective will to save those countless myriads who are brought to the regular and the daily slaughter, all the difference between a gradual and an instant death. And there is a practice realized in everyday life which you can put down—a practice which strongly reminds us of a ruder age that has long gone by; when even beauteous and high-born ladies could partake in the dance and the song, and the festive chivalry of barbaric castles, unmindful of all the piteous and the pining agony of dungeoned prisoners below. We charge a like unmindfulness on the present generation. We know not whether those wretched animals whose still sentient frameworks are under process of ingenious manufacture



for the epicurism or the splendour of your coming entertainment—we know not whether they are now dying by inches in your own subterranean keeps, or through the subdivided industry of our commercial age are now suffering all the horrors of their protracted agony, in the prison-house of some distant street where this dreadful trade is carried on. But truly it matters nought to our argument, ye heedless sons and daughters of gaiety! We speak not of the daily thousands who have to die that man may live; but of those thousands who have to die more painfully, just that man may live more luxuriously. We speak to you of the art and the mystery of the killing trade—from which it would appear that not alone the delicacy of the food, but even its appearance is, among the connoisseurs of a refined epicurism, the matter of skilful and scientific computation. There is a sequence, it would appear—there is a sequence between an exquisite death and an exquisite or a beautiful preparation of cookery; and just in the ordinary way that art avails herself of the other sequences of philosophy—the first term is made sure, that the second term might, according to the metaphysic order of causation, follow in its train. And hence we are given to understand, hence the cold-blooded ingenuities of that previous and preparatory torture which oft is undergone, both that man might be feasted with a finer relish, and that the eyes of man might be feasted and regaled with a finer spectacle. The atrocities of a Majendie have been blazoned before the eye of a British public; but this is worse in the fearful extent and magnitude of the evil—truly worse than a thousand Majendies. His is a cruel luxury, but it is the luxury of intellect. Yours is both a cruel and a sensual luxury; and you have positively nought to plead for it but the most worthless and ignoble appetites of our nature.

But, secondly, and if possible to secure your kindness for our cause, let me, in the act of drawing these lengthened observations to a close, offer to your notice the bright and the beautiful side of it. I would bid you think of all that fond and pleasing imagery which is associated even with the lower animals, when they become the objects of a benevolent care, which at length ripens into a strong and cherished affection for them—as when the worn-out hunter is permitted to graze, and be still the favourite of all the domestics through the remainder of his life; or the old and shaggy house-dog that has now ceased to be serviceable, is nevertheless sure of its regular meals and a

decent funeral ; or when an adopted inmate of the household is claimed as property, or as the object of decided partiality, by some one or other of the children ; or, finally, when in the warmth and comfort of the evening fire, one or more of these home animals take their part in the living groupe that is around it, and their very presence serves to complete the picture of a blissful and smiling family. Such relationships with the inferior creatures supply many of our finest associations of tenderness ; and give, even to the heart of man, some of its simplest yet sweetest enjoyments. He even can find in these some compensation for the dread and the disquietude wherewith his bosom is agitated amid the fiery conflicts of infuriated men. When he retires from the stormy element of debate, and exchanges for the vindictive glare and the hideous discords of that outcry which he encounters among his fellows—when these are exchanged for the honest welcome and the guileless regards of those creatures who gambol at his feet, he feels that even in the society of the brutes, in whose hearts there is neither care nor controversy, he can surround himself with a better atmosphere far than that in which he breathes among the companionships of his own species. Here he can rest himself from the fatigues of that moral tempest which has beat upon him so violently ; and, in the play of kindness with these poor irrationals, his spirit can forget for a while all the injustice and ferocity of their boasted lords.

But this is only saying that our subject is connected with the pleasures of sentiment. And therefore, in the third and last place, we have to offer it as our concluding observation, that it is also connected with the principles of deepest sacredness. It may be thought by some that we have wasted the whole of this Sabbath morn on what may be ranked among but the lesser moralities of human conduct. But there is one aspect in which it may be regarded as more profoundly and more peculiarly religious than any one virtue which reciprocates, or is of mutual operation among the fellows of the same species. It is a virtue which oversteps, as it were, the limits of a species, and which in this instance prompts a descending movement on our part of righteousness and mercy towards those who have an inferior place to ourselves in the scale of creation. The lesson of this day is not the circulation of benevolence within the limits of one species. It is the transmission of it from one species to another. The first is but the

charity of a world. The second is the charity of a universe. Had there been no such charity, no descending current of love and of liberality from species to species, what, I ask, should have become of ourselves? Whence have we learned this attitude of lofty unconcern about the creatures who are beneath us? Not from those ministering spirits who wait upon the heirs of salvation. Not from those angels who circle the throne of heaven, and make all its arches ring with joyful harmony, when but one sinner of this prostrate world turns his footsteps towards them. Not from that mighty and mysterious Visitant, who unrobed Him of all His glories, and bowed down His head unto the sacrifice; and still, from the seat of His now exalted mediatorship, pours forth His intercessions and His calls in behalf of the race He died for. Finally, not from the eternal Father of all, in the pavilion of whose residence there is the golden treasury of all those bounties and beatitudes that roll over the face of nature; and from the footstool of whose empyreal throne there reaches a golden chain of providence to the very humblest of His family. He who hath given His angels charge concerning us, means that the tide of beneficence should pass from order to order, through all the ranks of His magnificent creation; and we ask, is it with man that this goodly provision is to terminate—or shall he, with all his sensations of present blessedness and all his visions of future glory let down upon him from above, shall he turn him selfishly and scornfully away from the rights of those creatures whom God hath placed in dependence under him? We know that the cause of poor and unfriended animals has many an obstacle to contend with in the difficulties or the delicacies of legislation. But we shall ever deny that it is a theme beneath the dignity of legislation; or that the nobles and the senators of our land stoop to a cause which is degrading, when, in the imitation of Heaven's high clemency, they look benignly downward on these humble and helpless sufferers. Ere we can admit this, we must forget the whole economy of our blessed gospel. We must forget the legislations and the cares of the upper sanctuary in behalf of our fallen species. We must forget that the redemption of our world is suspended on an act of jurisprudence which angels desire to look into, and for effectuating which, the earth we tread upon was honoured by the footsteps not of angel or of archangel, but of God manifest in the flesh. The distance upward between us and that mysterious Being, who let Himself down from heaven's high concave upon our lowly platform, sur-

passes by infinity the distance downward between us and everything that breathes. And He bowed Himself thus far for the purpose of an example, as well as for the purpose of an expiation; that every Christian might extend his compassionate regards over the whole of sentient and suffering nature. The high court of Parliament is not degraded by its attentions and its cares in behalf of inferior creatures—else the Sanctuary of Heaven has been degraded by its councils in behalf of the world we occupy; and, in the execution of which, the Lord of heaven Himself relinquished the highest seat of glory in the universe, and went forth to sojourn for a time on this outcast and accursed territory.

## SERMON IX.

*(Preached at the opening of the Scotch National Church, London, May 11, 1827.)*

## ON THE RESPECT DUE TO ANTIQUITY.

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”—JEREMIAH vi. 16.

It has been well said by Lord Bacon, that the antiquity of past ages is the youth of the world—and therefore it is an inversion of the right order, to look for greater wisdom in some former generation than there should be in our present day. “The time in which we now live,” says this great philosopher, “is properly the ancient time, because now the world is ancient; and not that time which we call ancient, when we look in a retrograde direction, and by a computation backward from ourselves.” There must a delusion, then, in that homage which is given to the wisdom of antiquity, as if it bore the same superiority over the wisdom of the present times, which the wisdom of an old does over that of a young man. When we speak of the wisdom of any age, we mean the wisdom which at that period belongs to the collective mind of the species. But it is an older species at present than it was in those days called by us the days of antiquity. It is now both more venerable in years, and carries a greater weight of experience. It was a child before the flood; and if it have not yet become a man, it is nearer to manhood now than it was then. Therefore, when reviewing the notions and the usages of our forefathers, we, instead of casting off the instructions of a greater wisdom than our own, may, in fact, be putting away from us childish things. It is in vain to talk of Socrates, and Plato, and Aristotle. Only grant that there may still be as many good individual specimens of humanity as before; and a Socrates now, with all the additional lights which have sprung up in the course of intervening centuries to shine upon his understanding, would be a greatly wiser man than the

Socrates of two thousand years ago. It is therefore well, in the great master of the New Philosophy, to have asserted the prerogative, and, in fact, the priority, of our present age; that to it belongs a more patriarchal glory than to all the ages of all the patriarchs; that our generation is a more hoary-headed chronicler, and is more richly laden with the truths and the treasures of wisdom, than any generation which has gone before it—the olden time, wherewith we blindly associate so much of reverence, being indeed the season of the world's youth, and the world's inexperience; and this our modern day being the true antiquity of the world.

But however important thus to reduce the deference that is paid to antiquity; and with whatever grace and propriety it has been done by him who stands at the head of the greatest revolution in Philosophy—we shall incur the danger of running into most licentious waywardness, if we receive not the principle, to which I have now adverted, with two modifications.

You will better conceive what these modifications are, by just figuring to yourself two distinct books, whence knowledge or wisdom may be drawn—one the book of the world's experience, the other the book of God's revelation; the one therefore becoming richer, and more replete with instruction every day, by the perpetual additions which are making to it; the other being that book from which no man can take away, neither can any man add thereunto.

Our first modification, then, is, that though, in regard to all experimental truth, the world should be wiser now than it was centuries ago, this is the fruit not of our contempt or our heedlessness in regard to former ages, but the fruit of our most respectful attention to the lessons which their history affords. In other words, as we are only wiser because of the now larger book of experience which is in our hands, we are not so to scorn antiquity, as to cast that book away from us; but we are to learn from antiquity, by giving the book our most assiduous perusal, while, at the same time, we sit in the exercise of our own free and independent judgment over the contents of it. Although we listen not to antiquity, as if she sent forth the voice of an oracle, yet we should look with most observant eye to all that antiquity sets before us. She is not to be the absolute mistress of our judgment, but still she presents the best materials on which the judgment of man can possibly be exercised. The only reason, truly, why the present age should be

wiser than the past, is that it stands on that higher vantage-ground which its progenitor had raised for it. But we should never have reached the vantage-ground, if, utterly heedless of all that has gone before, we had spurned the informations and the science of previous generations away from us. The man of threescore should not be the wiser of his age, did a blight come over his memory to obliterate all the experience and all the acquisitions of his former years.' The very remembrance of his follies makes him wiser—and thus it is that every succeeding race gathers a new store of instruction, not from the discoveries alone, but also from the devious absurdities and errors of all the races that had preceded it. The truth is, that an experiment may be as instructive by its failure as by its success—in the one case serving as a beacon, and in the other as a guide; and so from the very errors and misgivings of former days might we gather, by the study of them, the most solid and important accessions to our wisdom. We do right in not submitting to the dictation of antiquity; but that is no cause why we should refuse to be informed by her—for this were throwing us back again to the world's infancy, like the second childhood of him whom disease had bereft of all his recollections. Still we reserve the independence of our own judgment, while we take this retrospective survey, and ask for the old paths, and so compare them together as to separate the right from the wrong, and fix at length on the good way. And so, again, in the language of Bacon, "Antiquity deserveth that reverence, that men should make a stand thereupon, and discover what is the best way; but when the discovery is well taken then to make progression."

On pondering well the view that has been now given, you will come to perceive how there is in truth a perfect harmony between the utmost independence on the dictates of antiquity on the one hand, and on the other the most deferential regard to all its informations.

But there is a second modification, which, in the case of a single individual of the species, it is easy to understand, and which we shall presently apply to the whole species. There is a wisdom distinct from knowledge; and one rich in the acquisitions of the latter, may practically be driven from the way of the former, by the headlong impulse of his vicious and wrong affections. Now, a book of wisdom may be taught in very early childhood. It may, it is true, be the product of the accumulated experience of all ages; but it also may, as being a

book of moral instructions, and so dictated by the inspiration of a higher faculty than that of mere observation—it may, instead of having been produced by a slow experience, have been produced by the enlightened conscience of its author, although afterwards all experience would attest the way of its precepts to be a way of interest and of safety, as well as a way of excellence. The lessons of such a book may be urged upon man, and with all a parent's tenderness, from the outset of his education. He may have been trained by it to observe all the infant proprieties, and to lisp the infant's prayer. It may have been the guide and the companion of his boyhood; and not, perhaps, till in the wild misrule of youthful profligacies and passions, did he shut his eyes to the pure religious light wherewith it had shone upon his ways. We may conceive of such a man, that, after many years of vicious indulgence, of growing and at length confirmed hardihood, of gradually decaying and now almost extinct sensibility—we may conceive of this hackneyed veteran in the world and all its evil ways, that he is at once visited by the lights of conscience and memory; and that thus he is enabled to contrast the dislike, and the dissatisfaction, and the dreariness of heart, which now prey on the decline of his earthly existence, with all the comparative innocence which gladdened its hopeful and its happy morning. The wisdom of *his* manhood did not grow with its experience; for now that he looks back upon it, he finds it but a mortifying retrospect of wretchedness and folly; and the only way in which this experience can be of use to him now, is that it may serve as a foil by which to raise in his eyes the lustre and the loveliness of virtue. And as he bethinks him of his first, his early home, of the Sabbath piety which flourished there, and that holy atmosphere in which he was taught to breathe with kindred aspirations, he cannot picture to himself the bliss and the beauty of such a scene, mellowed as it is by the distance perhaps of half a century, and mingled with the dearest recollections of parents, and sisters, and other kindred now mouldering in the dust, he cannot recall for a moment this fond, though faded imagery, without sighing in the bitterness of his heart, after the good old way.

Now, what applies to one individual may apply to the species. As the world grows older, it may, by some sweeping obliteration of all its ancient documents, lapse again into second infancy; or even though it should retain all its experimental truth, and grow every day richer therein, yet it is conceivable that, from



various causes, it may come to shut its eyes against that moral or that revealed truth, which both are the offspring of a higher source than mere human experience. The one, or moral truth, may be taught in all its perfection to man when an infant; and the other, or revealed truth, may have been delivered to the world when it was young. Neither can be added to by the faculty of observation; and, unlike to the lessons of philosophy, the lessons of morality and revelation do not accumulate by the succession of ages. And just as the individual man might deviate in the progress of years, from the pure and perfect virtues that were inculcated upon his childhood, so the collective species might stray, in the progress of centuries, from that unsullied light which had been held forth to them by the lamp of revelation. In a prolonged course of waywardness, they may have wandered very far from the truth of heaven. They may have renounced all that docility and that dutiful subordination which characterize the disciples of a former age. Like as the tyranny of youthful passions might overbear the authority of those instructions which had been given by an earthly parent, so the tyranny of prejudice might overbear the authority of the lessons and the laws which had been given to the world by our heavenly Father. And like as the great spiritual adversary of the human race might, by the corrupt ascendancy which he wields over the hearts of men, seduce them from the piety of their early days—so, by means of a priesthood upon earth, standing forth to their prostrate and superstitious worshippers, and exercising over them all the power of Satan transformed into an angel of light, might he delude whole successive generations from the pure and primitive religion of their forefathers. And after, perhaps, a whole dreary millennium of guilt and of darkness, may some gifted individual arise, who can look athwart the gloom, and descry the purer and the better age of Scripture light which lies beyond it. And as he compares all the errors and the mazes of that vast labyrinth into which so many generations had been led by the jugglery of deceivers, with that simple but shining path which conducts the believer unto glory, let us wonder not that the aspiration of his pious and patriotic heart should be for the good old way.

We now see wherein it is that the modern might excel the ancient. In regard to experimental truth, he can be as much wiser than his predecessors, as the veteran and the observant sage is wiser than the unpractised stripling, to whom the world

is new, and who has yet all to learn of its wonders and of its ways. The voice that is now emitted from the schools, whether of physical or of political science, is the voice of the world's antiquity. The voice emitted from the same schools, in former ages, was the voice of the world's childhood, which then gave forth in lisping utterance the conceits and the crudities of its young unchastened speculation. But in regard to things not experimental, in regard even to taste, or to imagination, or to moral principle, as well as to the stable and unchanging lessons of Divine truth, there is no such advancement. For the perfecting of these, we have not to wait the slow processes of observation and discovery, handed down from one generation to another. They address themselves more immediately to the spirit's eye; and just as in the solar light of day, our forefathers saw the whole of visible creation as perfectly as we—so in the lights, whether of fancy, or of conscience, or of faith, they may have had as just and vivid a perception of Nature's beauties; or they may have had as ready a discrimination, and as religious a sense of all the proprieties of life; or they may have had a veneration as solemn, and an acquaintance as profound, with the mysteries of revelation, as the men of our modern and enlightened day. And, accordingly, we have as sweet or sublime an eloquence, and as transcendent a poetry, and as much both of the exquisite and noble in all the fine arts, and a morality as delicate and dignified; and, to crown the whole, as exalted and as informed a piety in the remoter periods of the world, as among ourselves, to whom the latter ends of the world have come. In respect of these, we are not on higher vantage-ground than many of the generations that have gone by. But neither are we on lower vantage-ground. We have access to the same objects. We are in possession of the same faculties. And, if between the age in which we live, and some bright and bygone era, there should have intervened the deep and the long-protracted haze of many centuries, whether of barbarism in taste, or of profligacy in morals, or of superstition in Christianity, it will only heighten, by comparison, to our eyes, the glories of all that is excellent; and if again awakened to light and to liberty, it will only endear the more to our hearts the good old way.

We now proceed to the application of these preliminary remarks. We do not think that we presume too much, when we address ourselves to the majority of those who are here present, as if they were the friends and adherents of the Church of Scot-

land; and we shall endeavour, on the principles which we have just attempted to expound, first to appreciate the titles of the founders of that church to the respect and the confidence of its disciples—and, secondly, to consider how this respect should be qualified, so as not to degenerate into idolatry.

You will now perceive, first, how in regard to all experimental truth, the moderns, furnished as they are with a larger and more luminous book of experience, should, in the language of the Psalmist, “understand more than the ancients,”—and, secondly, how in regard to all theological truth, furnished as they are with the same unaltered and unalterable book of revelation, they should at least understand as much as the ancients. Some would on this ground too, contend for the superiority of our modern day, because of the successive labours of that criticism wherewith the Sacred Volume is, not amended or added to, but wherewith the obscurities which are upon the face of it may be gradually cleared away. We do not lay great stress upon this observation, for, without depreciating the worth of scriptural criticism, we cannot admit that all the additional light which is evolved by it, bears more than a very small fractional value to the breadth and the glory of that effulgence which shines from our English Bible, on the mind of an ordinary peasant. On either supposition, however, the most enlightened of our moderns is, in regard to the one book, on fully equal, and in regard to the other, on a far higher vantage-ground than the most enlightened of our ancients; and while it is our part to be as profoundly submissive as they, to all that has been said, and to all that has been done, by the God who is above us, here we sit in the entire right of our own independent judgment on all that has been said, and on all that has been done, by the men who have gone before us.

The great service, then, for which the Scottish and other reformers, in their respective countries, deserve the gratitude of posterity, is not that they shone upon us with any original light of their own, but simply that they cleared away a most grievous obstruction which had stood for ages, and intercepted from the eyes of mankind the light of the book of revelation. This they did, by asserting, in behalf of God, the paramount authority of His Scripture over the belief and the consciences of men; and asserting in behalf of man, his right of private judgment on the doctrine and the information which are contained in the oracles of God. This right of private judgment, you will observe, is a right maintained not against the authority of God, but against

the authority of men, who have either added to the oracles of God, or who have assumed to themselves the office of being the infallible and ultimate interpreters of His word. It was against this that our reformers went forth and prevailed. Theirs was a noble struggle for the spiritual liberties of the human race, against the papacy of Rome, and nobly did they acquit themselves of this holy warfare. At first it was a fearful conflict; when, on the one side, there was the whole strength of the secular arm, and, on the other, a few obscure but devoted men, whose only weapons were truth and prayer, and suffering constancy. And it is a cheering thought, and full of promise both for the moral and political destinies of our world, that, after all, the great and the governing force which men ultimately obey, is that of Opinion—that the cause of truth and righteousness, cradled by the rough hand of persecutors, and nurtured to maturity amid the terrors of fierce and fiery intolerance, is sure at length to overbear its adversaries—that contempt, and cruelty, and the decrees of arbitrary power, and the fires of bloody martyrdom, are but its stepping-stones to triumph—that in the heat and the hardihood of this sore discipline, it grows like the indestructible seed, and at last forces its resistless way to a superiority and a strength before which the haughtiest potentates of our world are made to tremble. The Reformation by Luther is far the proudest example of this in history—who, with nought but a sense of duty and the energies of his own undaunted heart to sustain him, went forth single-handed against the hosts of a most obdurate corruption that filled all Europe, and had weathered the lapse of many centuries—who, by the might of his own uplifted arm, shook the authority of that high pontificate which had held the kings and the great ones of the earth in thralldom—who, with no other weapons than those of argument and Scripture, brought down from its peering altitude, that old spiritual tyranny, whose head reached unto heaven, and which had the entrenchments of deepest and strongest prejudice thrown around its base. When we can trace a result so magnificent as this to the workings of one solitary spirit—when the breast of Luther was capable of holding the germ or the embryo of the greatest revolution which the world ever saw—when we observe how many kindred spirits caught from his the fire of that noble inspiration by which it was actuated, and how powerfully the voice which he lifted up in the midst of Germany, was re-echoed to from the distant extremities of Europe by other voices—Oh! let us not despair of truth's

omnipotence, and of her triumph; but rest assured that, let despots combine to crush that moral energy which they shall never conquer, or to put out that flame which they shall find to be inextinguishable, there is now a glorious awakening abroad upon the world, and, in despite of all their policy, the days of its perfect light and its perfect liberty are coming.

Our own Knox was one in the likeness of Luther; and, perhaps, by nature of a firmer and hardier temperament than he. For it must be observed of the German reformer, that there were about him a certain softness and love of tranquillity, which inclined him more to the shade of a studious retirement, than to the high places of society. The truth is, that most gladly would he have hid himself in some academic bower from the strifes and the storms of the open world; and sore was the struggle in his bosom ere he did adventure himself into the scenes of controversy from which he afterwards came off so victorious. It was fortunate for mankind, that though his love of peace was strong, his sense of duty was yet stronger, and that with a force which he felt to be imperious, it bore him through the heats and the hazards of his great warfare. Still it was at the expense of a most painful conflict with the tender and the tremulous sensibilities of his nature; for really the man's native element was contemplation; and then did he find himself at his most appropriate exercise, when by the weapons, whether of a spiritual or literary championship, he fought, as he did, most manfully, the battles of the faith. Our countryman was altogether of sterner mood; and with a certain rigidity of fibre which the other had not, could better sustain himself in the fray, and the onset, and the close encounter of more immediate assailants. It has been said of him, in virtue of his impregnable nervous system, that he never feared the face of clay, and thus was he admirably fitted for the conduct of a high enterprise, amid the terrors of scowling royalty, and among the turbulent nobles of our land. Each had a part to sustain; and each was singularly qualified by Providence for the performance of it—the one, from his closet to spread the light of the principles of reformation over the face of Christendom—the other, in the boisterous politics of a court, or by the energy of his living voice from the pulpit, to do the executive work of reformation in one of the provinces of Christendom. It is obvious that Luther's was the superior station of the two; and that to him Knox was subordinate. And it is well in this bustling age, when there is so much of demand from the public

functionaries of our Church for the labour of mere handiwork, and so little for that of literary preparation—it is well to notice, in the present instance, that while the practical talent of Knox carried him to such high ascendancy over the affairs of men, the pure and the powerful intellect of Luther won for him a higher ascendancy still—that through the medium of the press, and by virtue of scholarship alone, he bore with greater weight than did all his coadjutors on the living history of the world—and that, after all, it was from the cell of studious contemplation, from the silent depository of a musing and meditative spirit, there came forth the strongest and the most widely felt impulse on the mechanism of human society.

This, then, is the first great service which our Reformers achieved for mankind, even freedom of access to the Scriptures of truth, and the right of private judgment, explained as we have already done, over the contents of it. The second, which springs immediately from the first, but which deserves a separate consideration, is a theology not created by them, but a theology evolved by them, and most eminently subservient both to the peace and the holiness of individuals, and to the general virtue of the world.

In Milner's *Church History* (a book that I would commend to the perusal of every devout and desirous Christian) we have a deeply interesting narrative of those mental processes through which Luther did at length find rest to his soul. There was nought whatever in all the penances of that laborious superstition wherein he had been educated, that could bring peace to his conscience, deeply stricken as it was by a sense of guilt, and of the holiness and awful majesty of that Being against whom he had offended. The Spirit of God seems, in the first instance, to have convinced him, and that most pungently and most profoundly, of the malignity of sin; and then it was that he felt how, in the whole round of the observances and absolutions of the Church of Rome, he could meet with no adequate Saviour. Meanwhile the law pursued him with its exactions and its terrors, and long and weary was the period of his spirit's agitations, ere he arrived at that hiding-place in which alone he could confidently feel that he was safe. He experienced, in regard to all the ceremonies of that corrupt ritual in which he had been trained, what the apostle affirms in regard to the not impure but still imperfect ritual of Moses: "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." And thus,

after the payment of all the debts and of all the drudgeries which his church had ordained for transgression, he felt that his sins were not taken away. He performed them, but he was not purged by them; and so a sense of his unexpiated guilt still adhered to him, like an arrow sticking fast. It was then that he was led to ask for the old paths, that he might find out the good way, and walk therein. And it was not till the light of Scripture, beaming with its own direct radiance, and powerfully reflected from the pages of Augustine, shone upon his inquiry—not till he came within view of that great sacrifice which was made once for the sins of the world—not till the imaginary merit of human actions was all swept away, and there was substituted in its place the everlasting righteousness which Christ hath brought in—not till he saw the free and the welcome recourse which one and all have upon this righteousness by faith; and how, instead of springing from the toilsome but polluted obedience of man upon earth, it comes graciously down, in a descending ministration from heaven, upon those who believe,—Not till then, could he behold the reparation that was commensurate with the demand and the dignity of God's violated law. Now was he made, and for the first time, to understand, that under the canopy of the appointed mediatorship, he might continue to hear the thunders of the law, yet feel that they rolled innocuous over him: and this, my brethren, was the place both of enlargement and of quietness, where he found rest unto his soul.

It is this doctrine of imputed righteousness that gives to the gospel message the character of a joyful sound, the going forth of which among all nations shall at length both reconcile and regenerate the world. That were indeed a gladsome land, where the truth was preached with acceptance and with power from all the pulpits. It is, in fact, the great bond of re-union between earth and heaven. It is like a cord of love let down from the upper sanctuary among the sinful men who are below; and with every sinner who takes hold, it proves the conductor, along which the virtues of heaven, as well as the peace of heaven, descend upon him. This doctrine of grace is altogether a doctrine according to godliness, and as much fitted to emancipate the heart from the tyranny of sin as from the terrors of that vengeance which is due to it. Oh, it is an idle fear, lest the preaching of the cross should spread the licentiousness of a proclaimed impunity among the people. All experience assures the opposite;

and that in parishes which are most plied with the free offers of forgiveness through the blood of a satisfying atonement, there we have the best and the holiest families.

But it may be suspected, that although such a theology is the minister of peace, it cannot be the minister of holiness. Now, to those who have this suspicion, and who would represent the doctrine of justification by faith—that article, as Luther calls it, of a standing or falling church—as adverse to the interests of virtue, I would put one question, and ask them to resolve it. How comes it that Scotland, which, of all the countries in Europe, is the most signalized by the rigid Calvinism of her pulpits, should also be the most signalized by the moral glory that sits on the aspect of her general population? How, in the name of mystery, should it happen that such a theology as ours is conjoined with perhaps the yet most unvitiated peasantry among the nations of Christendom? The allegation against our Churches is, that in the argumentation of our abstract and speculative controversies, the people are so little schooled to the performance of good works. And how then is it, that in our courts of justice, when compared with the calendars of our sister kingdom, there should be so vastly less to do with their evil works? It is certainly a most important experience, that in that country where there is the most of Calvinism, there should be the least of crime,—that what may be called the most doctrinal nation of Europe, should, at the same time, be the least depraved—and the land wherein people are most deeply imbued with the principles of salvation by grace, should be the least distempered either by their week-day profligacies, or their Sabbath profanations. When Knox came over from the school of Geneva, he brought its strict, and, at that time, uncorrupted orthodoxy along with him; and with it he pervaded all the formularies of that church which was founded by him; and not only did it flame abroad from all our pulpits, but, through our schools and our catechisms, it was brought down to the boyhood of our land; and from one generation to another, have our Scottish youth been familiarized to the sound of it from their very infancy; and unpromising as such a system of tuition might be in the eye of the mere academic moralist to the object of building up a virtuous and well-doing peasantry, certain it is, that, as the wholesale result, there has palpably come forth of it the most moral peasantry in Europe notwithstanding. We know of great and grievous declensions, partly owing to the extension of our crowded cities being most



inadequately followed up by such a multiplication of churches and parishes as might give fair scope to the energies of our ecclesiastical system; and principally, we fear, to a declension from that very theology which has been denounced as the enemy of practical righteousness. But on this last topic we forbear to detain you; for vastly rather than expatiate on the degeneracies of what may be termed the middle age of the Church of Scotland, we incline to rejoice in the symptoms of its bright and blessed revival; and would therefore only say, that should, in mockery of these anticipations, the people of our land fall wholly away from the integrity of their forefathers—should there come a great and general deterioration in the worth of our common people, it will only be because preceded by a great and general deterioration in the zeal, and the doctrines, and the services of our clergymen. And if ever the families of our beloved land shall have apostatized from the virtues of the olden time, it will lie at the door of pastors who have been unfaithful to their trust, and of pastors who have apostatized from the good old divinity of other days.

But in this enumeration of Knox's services to Scotland we must now pass on from the theology of this great reformer, to what may be called certain arrangements of ecclesiastical polity, which through his means have been instituted in our land. And this is the subject, we think, upon which the schemes and the settlements of a comparatively younger age lie most open to the animadversions of a now older world; for, while a perfect theology may be drawn at once from the now finished book of revelation, it is not a perfect ecclesiastical polity, but only one that admits of successive improvements which can be drawn from the yet unfinished but constantly progressive book of experience. On this ground, therefore, we shall consent to be enlightened by the venerable founder of our church, but we shall not consent to be enthralled by him; and in fearlessly commenting both upon his excellences and his errors, we feel ourselves to be only breathing in that element of liberty wherewith himself did impregnate the atmosphere of our now emancipated land—to be only following that noble example of independence which himself has bequeathed to us.

But in this part of our exposition we must be very far shorter than the magnitude of the theme would require; for it is the misfortune of almost every occasional sermon, that the topics wherewith it stands associated are far too unwieldy for one

address—else we should have ventured to apply our introductory principles on the subject of ancient authorities and ancient times, more closely than we can now afford to the question of that precise deference which is due to our illustrious Reformer. We should have especially urged it upon you, that neither he nor any other of the venerable founders of our Establishment shone upon us in their own radiance, but only by a light reflected upon us from the pure and primary radiance of Scripture—and that, in fact, the great service which they rendered to posterity lay in the removal of those obstructions which stood between the truths of revelation and the private independent judgment of men. It is in virtue of their exertions that each may now look to the Bible with his own eyes, and not with the eyes of another; and we only use the privilege which they have won for us, when we try even ourselves, either by that book of revelation which shines as brightly upon us as upon them, or by that book of experience to which every century is adding so many leaves, and which at present shines more brightly than ever on the men of our now older world. The man of the day that now is—if thoroughly and intelligently read in that book—is as much wiser than the man of a distant antiquity, as the hoary-headed sage is wiser than a stripling. And in utter reversal of the prevailing tendency to idolize the men of other days, as if they were the patriarchs of our species, we affirm that the Luthers, and the Knoxes, and the Calvins, and the Zuingliuses of old, are but as the youths of this world's history; and if there be any individuals now gifted with as great a degree of mental vigour and sagacity, they, with a larger book of experience before them, are in truth its bearded and its venerable patriarchs.

We shall now, however, confine ourselves to a very few sentences about three distinct matters of ecclesiastical polity—and that chiefly as specimens of the way in which a man of great authority and reputation may be deferred to when we think that he is in the right; and be questioned when we doubt that he is in the wrong.

Our first, then, is a topic of the most cordial and unmixed eulogy. Knox was the chief compiler of the First Book of Discipline, and to him we owe our present system of parochial education. By that scheme of ecclesiastical polity, a school was required for every parish; and had all its views been followed up, a college would have been erected in every notable town. On this inestimable service done to Scotland we surely do not

need to expatiate. The very mention of it lights up an instant and enthusiastic approval in every bosom. And with all the veneration that is due on other grounds to our Reformer, we hold it among the proudest glories of his name, that it stands associated with an institution which has spread abroad the light of a most beauteous moral decoration throughout all the hamlets of our land, and is dear to every Scottish heart as are the piety and the worth of its peasant families.

In the second topic to which we shall advert he was not so successful, but it argues not the less for his sagacity and his patriotism. We mean that contest in which he failed for the entire appropriation of the patrimony of the church to public objects, rather than that it should be seized upon by the rapacity of private individuals. On this matter I crave the reading of a short extract from the admirable biography of Knox by Dr. M'Crie—a work that should be enshrined in every public, and which is not sought after as it deserves, if it have not a place in every private library of Scotland.

“Another source of distress to the Reformer at this time, was a scheme which the courtiers had formed for altering the policy of the church, and securing to themselves the principal part of the ecclesiastical revenues. This plan seems to have been concerted under the regency of Lennox; it began to be put into execution during that of Mar, and was afterwards completed by Morton. We have already had occasion to notice the aversion of many of the nobility to the Book of Discipline, and the principal source from which this aversion sprung. While the Earl of Murray administered the government, he prevented any new encroachments upon the rights of the church; but the succeeding regents were either less friendly to them, or less able to bridle the avarice of the more powerful nobles. Several of the richest benefices becoming vacant by the decease, or by the sequestration of the Popish incumbents who had been permitted to retain them, it was necessary to determine in what manner they should be disposed of for the future. The church had uniformly required that their revenues should be divided and applied to the support of the religious and the literary establishments; but with this demand the courtiers were by no means disposed to comply. At the same time the total secularization of them was deemed too bold a step; nor could laymen with any shadow of consistency, or by a valid title, hold benefices which the law declared to be ecclesiastical. The expedient resolved on was,

that the bishoprics and other livings should be presented to certain ministers, who, previous to their admission, should make over the principal part of their revenues to such noblemen as had obtained the patronage of them from the court."

This most grievous error in the conduct of the Scottish reformation (but for which Knox is not at all chargeable), is but little understood by the public at large, and in the statement of which therefore we do not expect to be greatly sympathized with. It was that compromise which took place between the ecclesiastics and the nobles of our land; and in virtue of which the former concurred or rather were compelled to acquiesce, in both our church and our literary establishments being shorn of their patrimony. The effect has been that a revenue which might have been applied to the exigencies of an increasing population, now unprovided with the means of Christian instruction; or which might have been applied to uphold, in strength and in splendour, those Universities of our land, which both in their endowments and their architecture are fast hastening to degradation and decay—is now wholly secularized, and serves but to augment the expense and the luxury of private families. And in the face of all that contempt and that commonplace which the beneficed priesthood of every establishment has to endure, we scruple not to say, that what Knox by his sagacity foresaw, and which he strove in vain to make head against, has been most fearfully realized—and that the high interests both of religion and of learning suffer at this day under the effects of that unprincipled, that truly Gothic spoliation.

We are aware of a fashionable political economy in this our day, which, for the sake of leaving untouched the splendour and the luxury of our higher classes, would suffer the public functionaries to starve; and in opposition to which we at present affirm (for we have no time to argue), that in the progress both of landed and of mercantile wealth, both the officers of religion and the officers of education have been left immeasurably too far behind in the career of an advancing society. On this topic we make common cause with all other public functionaries; and, in despite of the popular outcry against it, we hold, that from the highest judges of the land to the humblest teacher of a village school, there ought to be one great and general augmentation—it being our first principle, that every public functionary should do his duty well; and our second, that every public functionary should be well paid for the doing of it.

The third topic to which we shall advert is that in which we hold Knox to have been in an error—though precisely such an error as I think that the book of our now larger experience, in which so many lessons are inscribed since his day, of the wisdom and efficacy of toleration, would have expelled from his mind.

It was an error, however, not confined to the reformers of any particular country; for, in truth, it was shared alike among all the theologians of all the denominations in Christendom. It consisted in the imagination, and it was an imagination quite universal in these days, that Christianity could not flourish, nay that it could not exist, save in the one framework of one certain and defined ecclesiastical constitution; and hence with us, that there could be no light and no efficacy in the ministrations of the gospel, unless they were conducted according to the forms and in the strict model and framework of Presbytery. And so in the works of some of the older worthies of the Kirk of Scotland, we read about as often of black Prelacy as we do of her who was arrayed in scarlet, and is the mother of all abominations. Now, it is surely better, that this extreme and exclusive intolerance is almost wholly done away; and better still it would be, if the two co-ordinate establishments of our island, while they kept by their own respective frameworks, should acknowledge each of the other, that although by a different machinery, there may be the same right and religious principle to animate the movements, and the same high capacities for religious usefulness with both; that if the one perhaps have more thoroughly leavened with Christianity the bulk of her population, the other is more signalized by the prowess of her sons in the high walks of Christian scholarship; that in her Clarkes, and her Butlers, and her Warburtons, and her Hurds, and her Horsleys, and her Paleys, and her Watsons, we behold the divines of a church, which of all others has stood the foremost and wielded the mightiest polemic arm in the battles of the Faith.

I entreat to be forgiven if I make one allusion more, if not to an error on the part of our old reformers, at least to a peculiarity of theirs, which is not, to say the least of it, so authoritatively enjoined by the book of God's revelation, as to stand exempted from all charge and reckoning on the part of those who, in our own modern day, have at least the benefit of a larger and more luminous book of experience than they had. We utterly refuse to go along with the ancients of our church in their stern and severe sentiment of Prelacy. And however right they may have

been in their sentiment of another denomination, yet still it is, at the very least, a questionable thing, whether they were right in their stern and severe treatment of Popery. After having wrested from Popery its armour of intolerance, was it right to wield that very armour against the enemy that had fallen? After having laid it prostrate by the use alone of a spiritual weapon, was it right or necessary, in order to keep it prostrate, to make use of a carnal one?—thus reversing the characters of that warfare which Truth had sustained, and with such triumph, against Falsehood; and vilifying the noble cause by an associate so unseemly, as that which the power of the state can make to bear on the now disarmed and subjugated minority. Surely the very strength which won for Protestantism its ascendancy in these realms is competent of itself to preserve it; and if argument and Scripture alone have achieved the victory over falsehood, why not confide to argument and Scripture alone the maintenance of the truth? It is truly instructive to mark, how, on the moment that the forces of the statute-book were enlisted on the side of Protestantism, from that moment Popery, armed with a generous indignancy against its oppressors, put on that moral strength which persecution always gives to every cause that is at once honoured and sustained by it. Oh, if the friends of religious liberty had but kept by their own spiritual weapons, when the cause was moving onward in such prosperity, and with such triumph! But when they threw aside argument, and brandished the ensigns of authority, then it was that truth felt the virtue go out of her; and falsehood, inspired with an energy before unknown, planted the unyielding footstep, and put on the resolute defiance. And now that centuries have rolled on, all the influences, whether of persuasion or of power, have been idly thrown away on the firm, the impracticable countenance of an aggrieved population.

But we gladly hasten away from all these topics, on some of which, indeed, we ought not to have touched, but for the purpose of illustrating the distinction between those cases in which we should defer to the voice of antiquity, and prize its direction as the good old way; and those cases in which the lesson that hath come down to us from antiquity, should be regarded in no other light than as the puerility of a then younger species, the yet weak and unformed judgment of the world's boyhood. The light of experience which feebly glimmers at the outset of History; brightens onward in its progress. But the same does not hold of

the light of revelation, which shone with as pure and as clear a radiance on the patriarchs of our church, as it hath since done on any of its succeeding generations. Nay, it is a possible thing, that in the ages which followed the first establishment of Presbytery in Scotland, there may have been deviations from the spirit and simplicity of Scripture; that the pride of intellect and of human speculation may have carried it high against that authoritative truth, which hath come down to our world from the upper sanctuary; that from the exercise of a careless and a corrupt patronage, many of our parishes may have been exposed to the withering influence of a careless and a corrupt clergy; that thus, in the shape of cold and heartless apathy, a moral blight, or mildew, may have descended on our land; and that, what with a meagre theology on the one hand, and an extinct or nearly expiring zeal upon the other, there may have been an utter degeneracy from that golden period, when the truths of the Bible shone full upon many an understanding, and the spirit of the Bible animated many a desirous and devoted heart. It is not that the wisdom of experience was greater then than it is now, but it is that the wisdom of faith and piety was greater then than it is now, that we should so much ameliorate our present age by calling back the genius of the olden time. And did we but revert as before to the strict guidance and authority of Revelation; did we, renouncing our own imaginations, make our submissive appeal to the Law and to the Testimony; did we only suffer the word of God to carry it at all times over the wayward fancies of men, and so recur to the apostolic humility, and the apostolic zeal, of former periods—this, this is what is meant in our text by the good old way.

In conclusion, let me now address you as members of the Church of Scotland, which in principle is essentially Protestant; and which, though like other churches it has its articles and its formularies of doctrine, yet wants no such discipleship as that which is grounded on blind submission to her authority—but only the discipleship of those who, in the free exercise of their judgment and their conscience, honestly believe her doctrine to be grounded on the authority of the word of God. Both her Catechism and Confession of Faith have been given to the public with note and comment, it is true, but with note and comment that consist exclusively of Bible texts; and so, like apples of gold in pictures of silver, they offer a list of dogmata, but of dogmata set, as it were, or embossed in Scripture. The natural

depravity of man; his need both of a regeneration and of an atonement; the accomplishment of the one by the efficacy of a divine sacrifice, and of the other by the operation of a sanctifying Spirit; the doctrine that a sinner is justified by faith, followed up, most earnestly and incessantly followed up, through the pulpits of our land, by the doctrine that he is judged by works; the righteousness of Christ as the alone foundation of his meritorious claim to heaven, but this followed up by his own personal righteousness as the indispensable preparation for heaven's exercises and heaven's joys; the free offer of pardon even to the chief of sinners, but this followed up by the practical calls of repentance, without which no orthodoxy can save him; the amplitude of the gospel invitations, and, in despite of all that has been so unintelligently said about our gloomy and relentless Calvinism, the wide and unexcepted amnesty that is held forth to every creature under heaven, so as that the message of reconciliation may be made to circulate round the globe, and the overtures of welcome and good-will from the mercy-seat above, be affectionately urged on all the individuals of all the families of earth below—these are the main credenda of a church that has oft been reproached for its hard and unfeeling theology—but nevertheless, a theology which, deeply seated as it still is in the affections of our peasantry, hath approved itself by their virtues and their general habits, to be after all the fittest basis on which to sustain the moral worth and the moral energies of a nation.

In adhering then to such a church and to such a creed, you adhere to what we have no hesitation in characterizing as the good old way of your forefathers—not the less dear, we trust, to many of you, that you have now separated from that interesting land, and perhaps look back through the dim and distant recollection of many years, to the days of your cherished and well-taught boyhood. In this house of wider accommodation, a far larger number of our countrymen than before, can realize the services of a Scottish Sabbath. And, when we think of the constant accessions which are making to this number, and that too, by the yearly influx of exposed and unprotected youth into this vast metropolis, the moral importance of such an erection as the present rises above all computation. We cannot look indeed to those who have recently quitted the parental roof, and now in the open world are in the midst of its snares and its fearful exposures, without regarding it as the most affecting of all spectacles, when any one of them gives up the comparative innocence



of his tender years, and thence passes into the hardihood and the knowing depravity of vice. In the whole compass of nature, there is not a wreck more lamentable, or which presents an object of more distressful contemplation, than does the ruin of youthful modesty. And the flower that withers upon its stalk, and all whose blushing graces have now vanished into the loathsomeness of vilest putrefaction, is but the faint emblem of so sad an overthrow. That indeed is one of the darkest transitions in the history of man, when he exchanges the simplicities of his early home for the riot, and the intemperance, and the daring excesses that are acted in haunts of profligacy—when by the loud laugh of his forerunners in guilt, all his purposes of virtue are overborne, and he is at length tempted, among the urgencies and the contaminations of surrounding example, to cast his principle and his purity away from him. Be assured that, in the wild and lurid gleams of frantic dissipation, there is nought that can compensate for the calm, the beauteous lustre, which some have left behind you in the abode of domestic piety. And therefore, now that you have departed from the hallowed influences of an atmosphere so pure and so kindly, let me entreat you, by all the high interests which belong to you as immortal creatures, that you forget not the solemnity of a father's parting advice, that you forget not the tenderness of a mother's prayers.

One of the likeliest preservatives of conduct through the week, is a powerful religious application to the conscience upon the Sabbath. And we repeat it as matter of high gratulation to our Scottish families, that, in a place so capacious as this, the lessons of Christianity are to be ministered according to the forms of our Church, and by one of the most distinguished of her sons—a minister who has ever counted it a small matter to be judged of man's judgment, but who is solemnized by the thought that He who judgeth him is God—a minister who combines with the utmost fearlessness for the creature, the utmost docility and reverence for the Creator—one whose talents and whose colossal strength of mind could have borne him aloft to the most arduous heights of science, but who now holds it his more becoming, as indeed it is his more dignified part to give himself wholly to the studies and the pursuits of sacredness—one who is willing to spend and be spent for the eternity of his people, and who, after having survived the buffetings of a whole world of gainsayers, now sits down amongst you with the well-earned attachment of the thousands who know his worth, and

who have been awakened by his ministry. His are not the short-lived triumphs of a mere popular empiricism, but the fairly won distinction of one who possesses the stamina of worth and endurance, being alike gifted with great principle and with great power. But it is not distinction that he seeks; for intent upon higher objects, we trust the paramount aim of his spirit to be not his own glory, but the glory of the Master whom he serves; and that actuated by motives which the world can neither understand nor sympathize with, he has received of that grace from above which is given only to the humble, and the want of which would stamp an utter impotency on the ablest and most splendid ministrations. If thus upholden, he has nothing to fear. Already have the outrages of a rude and licentious press broken their strength upon him, and are dissipated. And now that the fume, and the turbulence, and the uproar of this temporary warfare have been all cleared away, does he stand forth with a moral dignity on his part, and a warranted confidence upon yours, which, under God, are the best guarantees for the success of his future labours.

May the Spirit of all grace abundantly strengthen and uphold him in the arduous office to which he has been called. May living water from the sanctuary above descend on the ministrations of the word here below; and both fertilizing the soil of your hearts, and fructifying the good seed which is deposited there, may you be made to abound in all the fruits of righteousness. May this House in future years be the scene of many sound and scriptural conversions; and never, till in the course of generations its walls have mouldered into decay, and its minarets have fallen, never may it cease, either in our own day or in the days of our children's children, to be a gate to Heaven—a place of busy and successful preparation for Heaven's exercises and Heaven's joys.

## SERMON X.

*(Preached at the opening of the new Presbyterian Chapel in Belfast, Sept. 23, 1827.)*

THE EFFECT OF MAN'S WRATH IN THE AGITATION OF RELIGIOUS  
CONTROVERSIES.

"The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."—JAMES i. 20.

WITHOUT attempting, what we should feel to be impossible within the limits of one discourse, to expound the principle of our text in all its generality, we shall satisfy ourselves with adverting to but one or two special applications of it. We shall first consider the effect of man's wrath when interposed between the call of the gospel and the minds of those to whom the gospel is addressed—and, secondly, consider the effect of man's wrath when interposed between a right and a wrong denomination of Christianity.

I.—You are all aware of there being much wrathful controversy on the part of men relative to the gospel of Jesus Christ, wherein the righteousness of God is said by the apostle to be revealed from faith to faith. To understand the way in which this great message from heaven to earth may be darkened, and altogether transformed out of its native character by the conflict and controversy of its interpreters, we ask you to conceive the effect, if a message of most free and unqualified kindness from some earthly superior were just to be handled in the same way. We may imagine that in his bosom there is nought but the utmost good-will to us, in all its truth and in all its tenderness; and that he sends forth the expression of it in writing, on purpose that we may read and may rejoice; and that if we but perused this precious document with the simplicity of children, we could not fail to be gladdened by the assurances of a love which shone most directly and most unequivocally from all its pages. But instead of this we may further imagine, that between our minds and all the grace and goodness of this communication, there should spring up a whole army of expounders

—and that in the pride, and the heat, and the bitterness of argument they fell out among themselves—and that all were vastly too much engrossed, each with his own special understanding about the terms of the message, ever to meet together in harmony and in mutual felicitation on the broad and unquestionable truths of it. Is there no danger, we ask, amid the acerbities of such a thickening warfare, that men should lose sight of the mildness and the mercy that lay in that embassy of peace by which it had been stirred? Is it not a possible thing that many a humble spirit, whom the soft and the kind affection of the original message might else have wakened into confidence, shall feel itself disturbed and bewildered in the fierce and the fiery agitations of such an atmosphere as this? When we hear from one quarter that such is the import of the message, and that we shall forfeit all the beneficence which it proffers, unless we so understand it—when, in vehement resistance to this, we hear of another import, and even denounced upon them who refuse it, the wrath of Him whose good-will is the whole burden of the now disputed communication—when, moreover, a third and a different interpretation is listed against each of the two former, and supported with acrimony, and backed by the same menaces of a displeasure on the part of that universal friend, who had set himself forth in the benignest attitude, and lifted the widely-sounding call of reconciliation—certain it is, that when the mind of an inquirer is involved among these, it is occupied with topics of another description and another character altogether, from that of the calm and the kind benevolence which resides at the fountain-head, and which would have radiated from thence on the hearts of a delighted people, were it not for the intervening turbulence that serves to hide or at least to darken it. It is thus that, by the angry and the lowering passions of these middle men, an obscuration might be shed on all the goodness and the grace which sit on the brow of their superior; and that when stunned in the uproar of their sore controversy with the challenge, and the recrimination, and the boisterous assertion of victory, and all the other clamours of heated partizanship—that these might altogether drown the soft utterance of that clemency whereof they are the interpreters, and cause the gentler sounds that issue from some high seat of munificence and mercy to be altogether unheard.

Now, it is altogether worthy of our consideration, whether such might not be the effect of those manifold controversies that

have risen in regard to the terms and the truths of that gospel message which has come down from the sanctuary above to the men of our lower world. The love for mankind which resides in the bosom of the unseen and eternal God, is there most distinctly asserted; and there is also most full and frequent declaration of His willingness to receive us; and in every possible way of entreaty, and protestation, and kind encouragement, does He manifest the forthputtings of His longing affection towards us; and, rather than not reclaim us hapless wanderers to that blessedness with Himself, from which we had so widely departed, He lavished all the resources both of His omnipotence and of His wisdom on a scheme of reconciliation, by which even the guiltiest of offenders might draw nigh; and He sent the Son of His everlasting regards from heaven to earth, who had to surrender all His glories, and to suffer all the vengeance of an outraged law ere He could move away the obstructions which stood between sinners and the mercy-seat; and after having thus laboriously framed a pathway of access to that throne of righteousness which is now turned into a throne of grace, did he lift up a voice of invitation to walk in it—a voice so diffusive that it may go abroad over all, and yet so pointed that it singles out and specializes each of the human family; and now, with all the soul and sincerity of a Father's earnestness, does He ask in the hearing of that world He has done so much to save, "What more could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done for it?" Such is the character of that direct, that primary demonstration which has been made to us from heaven. Such the felt love for our species which is honestly and genuinely there; and well, we repeat, is it worthy of our full consideration, whether, across the dark, the troubled medium of human controversy, the sight of it is not tarnished to the eye—the sound of it, thus mingled with notes of harshest discord, is not lost upon the ear. In one place, the gospel is called the ministration of righteousness—in another, the gift which it offers is called the gift of righteousness; and they are said to possess or to receive the righteousness of God, who have laid their confident hold upon that offer. But while the direct view of a benignant and a beseeching God, as He urges the offer upon their acceptance, is so well fitted to charm them into confidence, is there nothing, we ask, in the din of this posterior and subordinate controversy that is fitted to disturb it? Surely the noise that arises from the wars and the wranglings of earth, falls

differently upon the hearing to that sweetest music which descended from the canopy that is over our heads, and which accompanied the declaration of good-will to us in heaven. And so, altogether, that theology which shines immediate from his Bible on the heart of the unlettered peasant, may come with altered expression and effect on the mind of the scholastic, after it has been transmuted into the theology of the portly and polemic folio. The Sun of Righteousness may shed a mild and beauteous lustre upon the one, which to the eye of the other is obscured in the turbulence of rolling vapours, in the lurid clouds of an angry and unsettled sky. It is precisely thus, we fear, that the dogmatism on the one hand, and the defiance upon the other, which are associated with the conflicts and the championship of our profession, may have dimmed, to the vision of those who are below, the face of the benign and the beautiful sanctuary above; and verily there is room for the question, whether in this way too we have not one exemplification of the text, that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

When God beseeches us to be reconciled to Him in Christ Jesus, there is placed before the mind one object of contemplation. When man steps forward, and, in the pride or intolerance of orthodoxy, denounces the fury of an incensed God on all who put not faith in the merits and the mediation of His Son, there is placed before the mind another and a distinct object of contemplation. And just in proportion to the varieties of dogmatism or debate will the mind shift and fluctuate from one contemplation to another. Certain it is that it must feel a different sort of affection, when directly engaged with the love of God in heaven, from what it does when tost and alternated among the wrathful elements of human controversy upon earth. It then breathes in another atmosphere; and the whole sense and savour of the encompassing medium feel differently from before. And still it comes to the same important but unhappy result, as if the music of the spheres had been drowned in the rude and resentful outcry of noises from beneath, and the ear had failed to catch the utterance of Heaven's inspiration, because lost and overborne amid sounds of earthliness. It is thus that the native character of Heaven's embassy may at length be shrouded in subtle but most effectual disguise from the souls of men; and the whole spirit and design of its munificent Sovereign be wholly misconceived by His sinful yet much-loved children.

We interpret the Deity by the hard and imperious scowl which sits on the countenance of angry theologians; and in the strife and clamour of their fierce animosities, we forget the aspect of Him who is upon the throne, the bland and benignant aspect of that God who waiteth to be gracious.

It is thus that men of highest respect in the Christian world have done grievous injury to the cause. Whether, we ask, would Calvin have found readier acceptance for his own favourite doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ (that only righteousness which God will accept in plea of our meritorious claim to the kingdom of heaven, and therefore called the righteousness of God)—whether was it likelier that he should have gained the consent of men's minds to this method of salvation, by declaring it in the spirit of gentleness and with the accents of entreaty, or by denouncing it in the spirit of an incensed polemic, and with that aspect which sits on his pages of severe and relentless dogmatism? Would it not have strengthened his cause, had he, in propounding the message of reconciliation to his fellows upon earth, caught more upon his heart of the benignity which prompted the sending of that message from heaven?—and had the eye, the voice, the manner of this able expounder of the counsels of God, represented more of the kindness which presided over these counsels, of the compassion felt in the upper sanctuary, and which there originated the forthgoing of the Saviour on our guilty world? Certain it is that there is nought to conciliate the spirits of men to the doctrine of Calvin, all true and all momentous as it is, in that wrath which glares upon us so repeatedly from the dark and angry passages of his argument. That violence and vituperation by which his Institutes are so frequently deformed never do occur, we venture to affirm, but with an adverse influence on the minds of his readers, in reference to the truth which he espouses. In other words, that truth which, when couched in the language and accompanied with the calls of affection, finds such welcome into the hearts of men, hath brought upon its propounders the reaction of stout indignant hostility, and just because of the stern intolerance wherewith it has been proposed by them. This difference in point of effect between the meek and the magisterial style of instruction, makes it of the utmost practical importance, that neither the pride nor the passions of men should mingle in the discussion, when labouring either with or against each other in the common pursuit of truth. For much

has it prejudiced the cause of the truth in the world, that it has so oft been urged and insisted on with that wrath of man, which most assuredly worketh not the righteousness of God.

And, though not strictly under our present head of discourse, there is one observation more which we feel it of importance to make ere we pass on to the next division of our subject. Apart from the transforming effect of human wrath to give another hue as it were to the complexion of the Godhead, and another expression than that of its own native kindness to the message which has proceeded from Him, there is a distinct operation in the mind of an inquirer after religious truth which is altogether worthy of being adverted to. When the controversialist makes an angry demand upon us for our belief in some one of his positions, why, that position may be the offered and the gratuitous mercy of God in heaven, and yet the whole charm of such a proposal may be dissipated, just through that tone and temper of intolerance in which it is expounded to us upon earth. When entertained in the shape of a direct announcement from the Father of mercies Himself, it comes with a wholly different impression upon the heart from what it does when entertained in the shape of an article that has been fashioned by a system-builder, and then fulminated against us by the hand of human combatants. All that hope and that happiness which might else have beamed from the doctrine of grace, and that instantly upon the soul, may, as it were, be neutralized by the passionate and peremptory style of menace wherewith faith in that doctrine is insisted upon. This we have already considered; yet it must not be overlooked, that even for the hope and the happiness faith is indispensable—that ere we can rejoice in any truth or take the salutary impression of it upon our hearts, the truth must be believed in; and indeed the Bible itself accompanies its statements of doctrine with the exaction of our faith in them. Without this faith in their reality we can have no benefit from the objects of revelation. Faith is the avenue through which they come into contact with the inner man, and by which alone they can obtain an influence over the affections. It is not to be wondered at, then, that, possessing, as it does, such vital importance, they who are in earnest after their salvation should set such extreme value on the acquisition of faith. It is to them the pearl of great price. If, under the economy of the Law, men staked their eternity upon their works—under the economy of the gospel, they stake their eternity upon their faith. The longings and the labourings



of their hearts are now as much after the right belief as formerly they were after the right obedience. And if, while "Do this and live" was the reigning principle of Heaven's administration, the natural anxiety for every expectant of Heaven was to do properly—now that the reigning principle is, "Believe and be saved," it is as just as natural that it should be his intense and his unceasing anxiety to believe properly.

Now, observe the misdirection of which he is consequently in danger. It is apt to turn away his attention from the object of faith to the act of faith. If faith be anywhere it is in the mind, which is its proper habitation—its place of occupancy and settlement; and when he wants to ascertain the reality of his faith, it is indeed most natural that he should go in quest of the precious article through the secrecies of this dwelling-place. In other words, he looks inwardly instead of outwardly. In place of gazing abroad among the objects of Revelation, and gathering from thence of that direct radiance which they might have streamed upon his soul, he seeks for the reflection of these objects within the soul itself; and while so employed, his inverted eye shuts out all the illumination that is above him and around him. It is not by looking inwardly upon the eye's own retina, but by looking openly and outwardly on the panorama of external nature, that we see the glories of the summer landscape. It is not by casting a downward regard on the tablet of vision, but by casting an upward regard on the starry firmament, that the wonders of the midnight sky become manifest to the beholder. And it is not, let it ever be remembered, it is not by a painful, by a probing scrutiny amongst the mysteries or the metaphysics of the inner man, that we admit the light of heaven into the soul. The peace and the joy of a believer do not spring from the traces which he finds to be within him. They emanate and they descend upon his heart, from the truths which are suspended over him. The work of faith consists not in looking to himself, but in looking to the reconciled countenance of God. He fetches its gladdening assurances, not from any light that has been struck out among the arcana of his own spirit, but from that great fountain of light, the Sun of Righteousness—the spiritual luminary which has arisen to the view of a sinful world, that every one who looketh may be saved. If you invert this order, if you look into yourself without looking unto Jesus, then you suspend the exercise of faith at the very time that you are trying to make sure of its existence. You look the wrong

way; and if by the former influence, even that of man's wrath interposed between you and God's kindness, you were disturbed out of confidence and of comfort—by the present influence you are at least distracted away from them, even because the eye of the mind, when inverted upon itself, is averted from the proper object of confidence.

Let us never cease then the presentation of this object before you; and, when visited by fears, whether in looking to one's own heart, and finding nought but darkness and destitution there; or on looking to the countenance of our fellow-men, and beholding the menace and intolerance which are depicted there; let all be overborne by a direct view of the kindness of God. Let us lift ourselves above these turbid elements of earth, and be firmly and erectly confident of benevolence in heaven. The good-will that is there towards the children of men, the joy that is felt there over every sinner who repenteth, the mild radiance there of the upper sanctuary, and the grace and the benignity which invest its glorious mercy-seat—these are the things which be above—these the stable realities of that place where God sitteth on His throne, and where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Yonder is the region of light and of undoubted love; and, whatever the mists or the obscurations may be of this lower world, there is welcome, free, generous, unbounded welcome to one and all in the courts of the Eternal. The sun of our firmament is still as gorgeously seated in fields of ethereal beauty and radiance as ever, when veiled from the sight of mortals by the lowering sky that is underneath. And so of the shrouded character of the Godhead, who, all placid and serene in the midst of elevation, is often mantled from human eye by the turbulence and the terror of those clouds which gather on the face of our spiritual hemisphere. The unchangeableness of that Deity, whose compassions fail not—the constituted Mediator, who is the same to-day, and yesterday, and for ever—the promises, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus our Lord—the word of revelation, whereof it has been said, that heaven and earth shall pass away ere it can pass away—These are the enduring, the unextinguishable lights in the palace of our mild and munificent Sovereign, and in which all of us are called upon to rejoice. There may be no comfort to draw up from the darkling recesses of our own spirits; but surely it may descend upon us in floods of brightness and beauty from a canopy so glorious. There may be nought to gladden, in the wrathful and the warring controversies of the men who

stand betwixt us and heaven; but in heaven itself there are notes of sweeter and kinder melody, and well may we assure ourselves in the gratulation that is awakened there over every sinner who turns unto God.

We are aware, all the time, that the truth, as it is in Jesus, must be sustained by argument—that this is one of the offices of the church militant upon earth, whose part it is to silence gainsayers; and not only to contend, but to contend earnestly, for the faith which was delivered unto the saints. For this service, we stand deeply indebted to the lore and the laborious authorship of other days—to the prowess of those dauntless theologians, those gigantic men of war, who, skilled alike in the mysteries of the Bible, and in the mysteries of our common nature, have, in the vast and the venerable productions which they left behind them, reared such bulwarks around the system of a sound and a settled orthodoxy, as have never yet been stormed. Yet the most prominent article of that system—that which Luther denominated the test of a standing or a falling church—even the doctrine of imputed righteousness by faith—although argument be the weapon by which to defend it against the inroad of adversaries, it is not the weapon of penetration or of power by which to force a way for its saving reception into the heart of a believer. It is not in the clangour of arms, or in the shouts of victory, or in the heat and hurry even of most successful gladiatorship—it is not thus that this overture of peace and pardon from heaven falls with efficacy upon the sinner's ear. It is not so much in the act of intellectually proving the truth of the doctrine, as in the act of proceeding upon its truth, when we affectionately urge the sinner to make it the stepping-stone of his return unto God—it is then most generally that it becomes manifest unto his conscience, and that he receives in love that which in the spirit of love and kindness has been offered to him. In a word, it is when the bearer of this message from God to man, urges it upon his fellow-sinners in the very spirit which first prompted that message from the upper sanctuary—it is when he truly represents, not alone the contents of Heaven's overtures, but also that heavenly kindness by which they were suggested—it is when he entreats rather than when he denounces, and when that compassion, which is in the heart of the Godhead, actuates his own—it is when standing in the character of an ambassador from Him who so loved the world, he accompanies the delivery of his message with the looks and the language of his own mani-

fest tenderness—it is then that the preacher of salvation is upon his best vantage-ground of command over the hearts of a willing people; and when he finds that charity, and prayer, and moral earnestness have done what neither lordly intolerance nor even lordly argument could have done, it is then that he rejoices in the beautiful experience, that it is something else than the wrath of man which is the instrument of working the righteousness of God.

The apostle says, "Covet earnestly the best gifts," and then adds, "but yet I show you a more excellent way"—even the way of charity. We are also bidden "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints." But notwithstanding, there may be a still more excellent and effectual way, even to "speak the truth in love." It is thus that the gospel, sometimes in one passage, blends firmness of principle with the gentleness of kind affection, towards those who are its adversaries. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity." "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves and to all men." The vehemence of passion is one thing. The vehemence of sentiment is another. There is a hatefulness in the first. There is a certain nobleness to be liked and admired in the second. The former vents itself in malice against the heretic. The latter urges and assails the heresy. The strength of irritation is wholly different from the strength of conviction; and a deep sensation of the importance of truth, is wholly different from a sensitive dislike towards him who resists or disowns it. The Bible makes the discrimination between these two; and it tells us to shun the one, and to cherish the other to the uttermost. Under its guidance, we shall know both how to maintain an unyielding front of resistance to the error, and yet to have compassion and courtesy for him who is the victim of it. It is a triumph to conquer by the power of argument—but it is a greater triumph to conciliate and convert by the power of charity.

II.—But this brings me to the second head of discourse, under

which I shall now, very shortly, consider the effect of man's wrath, when interposed between a right and a wrong denomination of Christianity.

It can require no very deep insight into our nature to perceive, that when there is proud or angry intolerance on the side of truth, it must call forth the reaction of a sullen and determined obstinacy on the side of error. Men will submit to be reasoned out of an opinion, and more especially when treated with respect and kindness. But they will not submit to be cavalierly driven out of it. There is a revolt in the human spirit against contempt and contumely, insomuch that the soundest cause is sure to suffer from the help of such auxiliaries. When passion is enlisted on one side of a controversy, then provocation is awakened on the other side—and the parties erecting themselves into stouter and loftier attitude than before, stand to each other in respective positions which are mutually impregnable. It is this infusion of temper by which the force even of mightiest argument is paralysed. It is when disdain meets with defiance, when exasperating charges meet with indignant recriminations, when the shouts of exulting victory may sting the bosom of adversaries with the humiliations, but never draw from their lips the acknowledgments of defeat—it is when the war of words is animated with feelings such as these, that Truth, whose still small voice is all-powerful, falls from her omnipotence and her glory; and Falsehood, resolute in the midst of such stormy agitations, is only riveted thereby more firmly upon her basis. To the perversity of human error, there is now superadded the still more hopeless perversity of human wilfulness—and on looking at the whole resulting amount from these fulminations of heated partisanship, one cannot fail to acknowledge, that indeed the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

Nevertheless, it is the part of man, both to adopt and to advocate the truth, lifting his zealous testimony in its favour. Yet there is surely a way of doing this in the spirit of charity; and while strenuous, while even uncompromising in the argument, it is possible surely to observe all the amenities of gentleness and good-will in these battles of the faith. For example, it is not wrong to feel either the strength or the importance of our cause, when we plead the Godhead of the Saviour; when, in affirming this to be an article of our creed, we simply repeat a statement of Scripture, as distinct and absolute as it is in the power of vocables to make it—even that “the Word was God:” when,

after that a sound erudition hath pronounced the integrity of this one passage, we should deem it a waste and a perversion of criticism, to suspend our belief, till we had adjusted all the merits of all the controversies on other and more ambiguous passages; when after being satisfied that the Bible is indeed the record of an authentic communication from heaven to earth, we put faith in this its clearest utterance, than which it is not within the compass of human language to frame a more unequivocal, or a more definite; when contrasting the ignorance of a creature so beset and limited as man, with the amplitude of that infinite and everlasting light, from the confines of which the message of revelation hath broke upon our world, we count it our becoming attitude to listen to all its announcements even as with the docility of little children; when, more especially, in profoundest darkness as we are, about the nature or constitution of the Deity, who, throned in the mystery of His unfathomable essence, pervades all space, and, without beginning or without end, unites in His wondrous Being the extremes of eternity, we hold that one information of Himself, and from His own authoritative voice, should rebuke and bid away all human imaginations; when, placed, as we are, in but a corner of that immensity which He hath peopled with innumerable worlds, with nought to instruct us but the experience of our little day, and nought to guide our way to that region of invisibles which is all His own—we, surrendering each fond and favourite preconception of ours, defer to the teaching of Him who is Himself the fountain-head of existence, and whose eye reaches to the furthest outskirts of the universe that He has formed. And should He but tell of Him who was made flesh, that He was in the beginning with God, and that He was God, surely on a theme so vastly above us and beyond us, it is for us to regulate our belief by the very letter of this communication; and, on the basis of such an evidence as this, to honour the Son even as we honour the Father, is the soundest philosophy, as well as the soundest faith.

Yet with all these reasons for holding ourselves to be intellectually right upon this question, there is not one reason why the wrath of man should be permitted to mingle in the controversy. This, whenever it is admitted, operates not as an ingredient of strength, but as an ingredient of weakness. Let Truth be shrined in argument—for this is its appropriate glory. And it is a sore disparagement inflicted upon it by the hand of vindictive theologians, when, instead of this, it is shrined in ana-

thema, or brandished as a weapon of dread and of destruction over the heads of all who are compelled to do it homage. The terrible denunciations of Athanasius have not helped—they have injured the cause. The Godhead of Christ is not thus set forth in the New Testament. It is nowhere proposed in the shape of a mere dictatorial article, or as a naked dogma, for the understanding alone; and at one place it is introduced as an episode for the enforcement of a moral virtue. In this famous passage, the practical lesson occupies the station of principal, as the main or capital figure of the piece; and the doctrine on which so many would effervesce all their zeal, even to exhaustion, stands to it but in the relation of a subsidiary. The lesson is, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." And the doctrine (here noticed by the apostle, not to the end that he may rectify the opinion of his disciples, but primarily and obviously, to the end that he may rectify their conduct), the doctrine for the enforcement of the lesson is, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In these verses there is a collateral lesson for our faith; but the chief, the direct lesson, is a lesson of charity, which is greater than faith. And would the heart of the Trinitarian be but as obediently schooled as his head, by this passage—would Orthodoxy, instead of the strife and the vain-glory which have given her so revolting an aspect, both of pride and sternness, but put on her bowels of mercy, and to her truth add tenderness—would the champions of a Saviour's dignity but learn of His meekness and lowliness, and, while they assert Him to be God manifest in the flesh, meet the perversity of gainsayers in the very spirit of gentleness that He did,—This were the way by which the Church militant might be borne onwardly and upwardly to the station of the Church triumphant in the world. This is the way in which, by the mechanism of our moral nature, to obtain ascendancy over the hearts of men. Truth will be indebted for her best victories, not to the overthrow of Heresy discomfited on the field of argument, but to the surrender of Heresy disarmed of that in which

her strength and her stability lie,—of her passionate, because provoked, wilfulness. Charity will do what reason cannot do. It will take that which letteth out of the way—even that wrath of man, which worketh neither the truth nor the righteousness of God.

But our time does not permit of any further illustration—else we might have shown at greater length, how, by the oversight of this great principle, the cause both of truth and of righteousness has been impeded in the world. Theologians have forgotten it in their controversies. Statesmen have forgotten it in their laws. Never was there a greater blunder in legislation, than that by which the forces of the statute-book have been enlisted on the side of truth; and error, as was quite natural, instead of being subdued, has been thereby settled down into tenfold obstinacy. The glories of martyrdom have been transferred from the right to the wrong side of the question; and superstition, which, in a land of perfect light and perfect liberty, would hide her head as ashamed, gathers a title to respect, and stands forth in a character of moral heroism, because of the injustice which has been brought to bear upon her. She ought, in all wisdom, to have been left to her own natural decay—or, at least, reason and kindness are the only engines which should have been made to play upon her strongholds. But with such an auxiliary, as the mere authority of terror upon the one side, and such a resistance as that of a generous and high-minded indignation upon the other—there have arisen the elements of an interminable warfare. And not till truth, relieved of so unseemly an associate, be confined to the use of her proper weapons, will she be reinstated on her proper vantage-ground. It is not in the fermentation of human passions and human politics, that the lessons of heaven can be with efficacy taught—and ere these lessons shall go abroad in triumph over the length and breadth of the land, we must recall the impolicy by which we have turned a whole people into a nation of outcasts. To exclude is surely not the way to assimilate. It is by pervading, instead of separating into an unbroken mass, and then placing it off at a distance from us—it is by extensively mingling with the men of another denomination, in all the walks of civil and political business—it is then, that the occasions of converse and of courtesy will be indefinitely multiplied—and then will it be found, that it is by an influence altogether opposite to the wrath of man, that we are enabled to work the righteousness of God.



But let us not make entrance on a field to the verge of which we have now been conducted by the light of a principle that is abundantly capable of shedding most beautiful, as well as most beneficent illustration over the whole of it. Let us rather conclude with the application of our text, not to the affairs of an empire or the affairs of a church, but rather to the affairs of a single congregation. Let us recur, though but for one moment ere we shall have brought our address to its close, to that spirit of kindness and good-will which prompted the original formation of the gospel message in the upper sanctuary, as being indeed the very spirit by which the expounder of that message ought to be actuated. He may have at times to engage in conflict with the infidels or the heretics around him. Nevertheless let him be assured, that it is by other armour than that which is wielded on the field of controversy—by an influence more powerful still than even that of overbearing argument, by the moral and affectionate earnestness of a heart that breathes the very charity and tenderness of Heaven upon his audience—it is thus that ministerial work is done most prosperously—the work of winning souls, of turning sons and daughters unto righteousness.

It is not so easy as may be thought to dislodge the fears or to win the confidence of nature in Him who is nature's God. There is a certain overhanging sense of guilt which forms the main ingredient of this alienation. It is this which darkens, to the eye of our world, the face of Heaven's Lawgiver; and brings such a burden of dread and of distrust on the spirit of man, that he feels nothing to invite but to repel and overawe, in the thought of Heaven's high sacredness. It is thus that the aspect of the Divinity is mantled and overshadowed to the human imagination; and instead of reading there the signals of welcome and good-will, we figure to ourselves a God dwelling in some awful and august sanctuary, or seated on a throne whence the fire of jealousy goeth forth to burn up and to destroy. It is sin which has laid this cold, this heavy obstruction, on the hearts of our outcast species. There is a strong, though secret, apprehension of displeasure in the countenance of Him who is above, which haunts us continually, and gives us the hourly, the habitual, feeling of outcasts. Man recoils to a distance from God, and regards God as placed at an inaccessible distance from him. There is between them a gulf of separation, across which man looks with disquietude and dismay, as he would to some spectral

or portentous image shrouded in mystery, and all the more tremendous that he is invisible and unknown. The greatest moral revolution which the spirit of man undergoes, is when these clouds which overhang the hemisphere of his spiritual vision are all cleared away, and the Godhead shines upon him with a new and an opposite manifestation—when simply because now seeing the Deity under an aspect of graciousness, he, instead of trembling before Him as an enemy, can securely trust in Him as a friend, and can rejoice in that Being of whom he has been made to know and to believe that He rejoices over him, to bless him and to do him good.

Now, it is by faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ and by it alone, that this great revolution is achieved. It is through the open door of His mediatorship that the sinner draws nigh, and beholds God as a reconciled Father. It is because of that blood of atonement wherewith the mercy-seat on high is sprinkled, that he is made to hear the voice of welcome and of good-will which issues therefrom. He now beholds no severity in the aspect of the Lawgiver; and yet, through the work of Him by whom the law was magnified, he there beholds the harmony of all the attributes. Such is the exquisite skilfulness of the economy under which we sit, that the truth, and the justice, and the holiness which out of Christ were leagued against us for destruction—now that these have emerged, in vindicated lustre, from that hour of darkness when the Saviour bowed down His head unto the sacrifice, they are the guarantees of pardon and acceptance to all who lay hold of this great salvation. It was in love to man that this wondrous dispensation was framed. It was kindness, honest, heartfelt, compassionate kindness, that formed the moving principle of the embassy from heaven to our world. We protest, by the meekness and the gentleness of Christ, by the tears of Him who wept at Lazarus' tomb, and over the approaching ruin of Jerusalem, by every word of blessing that He uttered, and by every footstep of this wondrous visitor over the surface of a land on which He went about doing good continually—we protest in the name of all these unequivocal demonstrations, that they do Him an injustice who propound this message in any other way than as a message of friendship to our species. He came not to condemn, but to save; not to destroy, but to keep alive. And he is the fittest bearer, he the best interpreter of these overtures from above, who urges them upon men not with wrath, and clamour, and controversial bitter-

ness, but in the very spirit of that wisdom from above, which is gentle, and easy to be entreated, and full of mercy.

In this way the moral power of the truth is superadded to its argumentative power. The kind affection of the speaker becomes an element of weight and influence in the demonstration which falls from him. He does more than barely utter the realities of the gospel—he pictures them forth in the persuasiveness of his own accents, in the looks as well as the language of his own manifested tenderness. He is the right person for standing between a people and heaven—seeing that Heaven's love to men is expressed visibly in his own countenance, audibly in the earnestness of his own voice. With a heart glowing in charity to his hearers, he is the fit representative, the best expounder of that embassy which has come from the dwelling-place of the Eternal on an errand of charity to our world. And fraught as he is with the tidings of mercy, it is not more when he urges the truth, than when he affectingly sets forth the tenderness of these tidings, that he charms the acquiescence of men, and his message is felt to be "worthy of all acceptance."

Before I leave you, I should like, even though at the end of our discourse and by an informal resumption of its first topic, to possess the heart of each who now hears me with the distinct assurance of God's proffered good-will to him, of His free and full pardon stretched out for the acceptance of him. If heretofore you have been in the habit of contemplating the gospel as at a sort of speculative distance, and in its generality, I want you now to feel the force of its pointed, its personal application, and to understand it as a message addressed specifically to you. The message has been so framed, and couched in phraseology of such peculiar import, that it knocks for entrance at every heart, and is laid down for acceptance at every door. It is true that you are not named and surnamed in the Bible; but the term "whosoever," associated as it frequently is with the offer of its blessings, points that offer to each and to all of you. "Whosoever will, let him drink of the water of life freely." It is very true that this written communication has not been handed to you, like the letter of a distant acquaintance, with the address of your designation and dwelling-place inscribed upon it. But the term "all" as good as specializes the address to each, and each has a full warrant to proceed upon the call, "Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be saved;" or, "Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

It is furthermore true, that Christ has not appeared in person at any of your assemblies, and singling out this one individual, and that other, has bid him step forward with an application for pardon, on the assurance that he would receive it;—but the term “every” singles out each; and He has left behind Him the precious, the unexcepted declaration, that “every one who asketh receiveth,” that “every one who seeketh findeth.” And lastly, it is true that He disperses no special messengers of His grace to special individuals; but the term “any,” though occupying but its own little room in a single text, has a force equally dispersive with as many messengers sent to the world as there are men upon its surface. “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” These are the words which, unlike the wheels of Ezekiel’s vision, turn every way, carrying the message of salvation diffusively abroad among all, and pointing it distinctively to each of the human family. Their scope is wide as the species, and their application is to every individual thereof. And what I want each individual present to understand is, that God in the gospel beseeches him to be reconciled—God is saying saying unto him, “Turn thou, turn thou, why wilt thou die?”

There are certain generic words attached at times to the overtures of the gospel, which have the same twofold power of spreading abroad these overtures generally among all, yet of pointing them singly at each of the human family. The “world,” for example, is a word of this import; and Jesus Christ is declared to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. After this, man, though an inhabitant of the world, and, as such, fairly within the scope of this communication, may continue to forbid himself, but most assuredly God has not forbidden him. The term “sinner” is another example, as being comprehensive of a genus, whereof each individual may appropriate the benefits that are said in Scripture to be intended for the whole. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*.” Still it is possible, as before, that many a sinner may not hold this saying to be worthy, or at least may not make it the subject of his acceptation. His demand perhaps is, that ere he can have a warrantable confidence in this saying for himself, he must be specially, and by name, included in it; whereas the truth is, that to warrant his distrust, his want of confidence after such a saying, he should be specially, and by name, excluded from it. After an utterance like this, instead of needing, as a sufficient

reason of dependence, to be made the subject of a particular invitation, he would really need, as a sufficient reason of dependency, to be made the subject of a particular exception. Is not the characteristic term, "sinner," sufficiently descriptive of him? as much so, indeed, as if he had been named and sur-named in Scripture. Does it not mark him as an object for all those announcements which bear on sinners as such, or sinners generally? The truth is, if we but understood the terms of this great act of amnesty, and made the legitimate application of them, we should perceive that to whomsoever the word of salvation has come, to him the offer of salvation has been made—that he is really as welcome to all the blessings of the New Testament, as if he had been the only creature in the universe who stood in need of them; as if he had been the only sinner of all the myriads of beings whom God hath formed; and as if to reclaim him, and to prevent the moral harmony of creation from being stained or interrupted by even so much as one solitary exception, for him alone the costly apparatus of redemption had been reared, and Christ had died, that God might be to him individually both a just God and a Saviour.

## SERMON XI.

*(Preached in St. George's Church, Edinburgh, before the Society for the Daughters of the Clergy, in May, 1829.)*

## ON RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."—2 TIMOTHY ii. 2.

THE apostle, by this verse, makes provision for the continuance of a gospel ministry upon earth. If he do not enact the mode of succession for all ages, he at least exemplifies it from his own age, down to a third generation of Christian teachers in the church. He ordained Timothy to this office, who was also to ordain others—which last, we may well conjecture, were not only to minister, but in their turn to ordain ministers who might come after them. It must be acknowledged, however, that there is marvellously little of express enactment in Scripture for an ecclesiastical constitution; and that this fertile controversy chiefly turns upon apostolical example, and the lights of ecclesiastical history—thus leaving it more in the shape of an indeterminate or discretionary question, and to be decided by considerations of expediency—a term which, in the Christian sense of the word, is of far loftier bearing than in the vulgar sense of it—as pointing, not to what makes most for the good of self or the good of society, but as pointing to what makes most for the prosperity of religion in the world, for the extension and the glory of our Redeemer's kingdom. Expediency, wherewith we commonly associate a certain character of sordidness, instantly acquires a sacredness of character, when its objects are thus made sacred; and its high aim is more thoroughly to Christianize a land, and to insure a fuller and more frequent circulation of the gospel among its families.

Now there is one question of ecclesiastical polity, which, in the lack of aught in the New Testament that is very distinct or authoritative upon the subject, we should feel much inclined to decide upon this ground—we mean the question of a religious

establishment. The truth is, that Christianity, for three centuries, was left to find its own way in the world—for during the whole of that period, none of this world's princes did it reverence. All this time it was treated as an unprotected outcast, or rather as a branded criminal. Yet the execrable superstition, as it was then called, neither withered under neglect, nor was quelled by the hand of persecuting violence. It grew and gathered into strength, under the terrible processes that were devised for its annihilation. Disgrace could not overbear it. Threats could not terrify it. Imprisonment could not stifle it. Exile could not rid the world of it, or chase the nuisance away. The fires of bloody martyrdom could not extinguish it. They could not all prevail against a religion, which had the blessing of heaven upon its head, and in its bosom the silent energies of conviction. And so it spread and multiplied among men. And, signal triumph of principle over power, of the moral over the sentient and the grossly physical! was the indestructible church nurtured into might and magnitude, and settled more firmly on its basis, amid the various elements which had conspired for its overthrow. Throughout the whole transition—from the time that the fishermen of Galilee tended its infancy, to the time that the emperors of Rome did homage to its wondrous manhood—it had neither the honours nor the revenues of an establishment. This change did not, and could not, originate with the ecclesiastical. It originated with the civil authority. It took effect by the state holding out to the church the right hand of fellowship. The advance was made by the former; and we should hold it tantamount to the vindication of a religious establishment, could we demonstrate how, without the compromise of principle, but rather in obedience to its purest and highest behests, the advance might be met and consented to by the latter.

Let me suppose, then, a society of Christians, great or small, actuated, as Moravians now are, by the spirit and the zeal of devoted missionaries—pressed in conscience by the obligation of our Saviour's last saying, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature"—bent on an expedition to the heathen of distant lands, if they had but an opening for the voyage and the means of defraying it. Hitherto, it will be admitted, that all is purely apostolical; and that, as yet, no violence has been done to the high and heaven-born sanctities of the gospel. Now what we ask is, whether there be aught to vitiate this holy character, in the next indispensable step of the means being provided; of

money being raised, for the essential hire and maintenance of the labourers ; of the vessel being equipped, that is to bear them onward in this errand of piety ; of the wealth being transferred to their hands from the hands of willing contributors, for the support of the missionary household, for the erection of the missionary church and missionary dwelling-places. Is there aught of earthly contamination in this ? Is the *Unitas Fratrum*, that church of spiritual men, at all brought down from its saintliness, by those annual supplies, without which their perils among the heathen could not have been encountered—their deeds of Christian heroism could not have been performed ? They maintain their own independence as a church notwithstanding. Their doctrines and discipline and mode of worship, are left untouched by the proceeding. In all matters ecclesiastical, they take their own way. It is true they are subsisted by others ; but in no one article, relating to the church's peculiar business, are they controlled by them. They are maintained from without ; but they need not, because of this, suffer one taint of desecration within. There is a connexion, no doubt, established between two parties ; but I can see nothing in it, save a pecuniary succour rendered upon one side, and a high service of philanthropy rendered upon the other—yet rendered according to the strict methods, and in rigid conformity with the most sacred principles of those who are embarked on this high and holy vocation. The transaction, as we now relate it, is of purest origin ; and has been nobly accredited by the blessed consequences which have followed in its train—for by means of these *hiring* labourers, the outposts of Christianity have been pushed forward to the very outskirts of the human population ; Christian villages have been reared in the farthest wilds of Paganism ; the prowling savages of Greenland and Labrador have been reclaimed to the habits and the decencies of civilized life ; and, greater far than any bliss or beauty which can be made to irradiate this fleeting pilgrimage, successive thousands of before untaught idolaters (under the effective tuition that has been brought to bear upon them) have lived in the obedience, and died in the triumphs of the faith.

Now the essential character of this whole transaction is the same—whether we conceive these gospel-labourers to be employed in the business of a home, or in the business of a foreign mission. By the one process you carry the lessons of our religion beyond, by the other you circulate them within, the territory of Christendom. The effect of the one is to spread Christianity externally



abroad, and so perhaps as to sprinkle many nations. The effect of the other is to fill up the internal vacancies, and so perhaps as thoroughly to saturate with Christianity one nation. It is not enough reflected on, that, under the latter process, a vastly greater number of human spirits may be medicated into spiritual and immortal health, than under the former; and, at all events, that this latter also must have its accomplishment—ere the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, even as the waters, which in their collapse admit of no internal vacancy, cover the sea. But the position which I chiefly want to fix at present is, that, whether the missionary movement be in an outward or in a homeward direction, its whole economy and character may remain essentially the same. The enterprise may be supported in its expenses by one party. It may be executed in its work and labour by another party. Each may be distinct of the other, and give no disturbance to the other. The secular men may provide the means; yet the ecclesiastical men, in their proper department, may have the entire and uncontrolled management. They may take their support from others in things temporal; yet suffer no invasion by them, on their inviolable prerogative of determining and ordering in things spiritual. Their maintenance cometh from others; but their worship, and their creed, and their formularies, and their sacraments, and their ministrations, both of word and of ordinances, are all their own. We yet see no compromise of principle in such a connexion as this. There is support given upon the one side. But there is no surrender, in the least article either of faith or holiness, made upon the other side. The only submission that we can perceive on the part of these missionaries or ministers to other men, is a submission to be fed by them; and that, that they might wait without distraction on the business of their own unshackled and uncontrolled ministry. In this instance then, as in the former, there is the like pure origin, and there may be a like or perhaps a surpassingly glorious result. If by the foreign mission, stations are planted along the margin of our peopled earth—by the home mission stations may be multiplied over the territory of our own land. If, as the effect of the one, we now behold villages of peace and piety in the distant wilderness—as the effect of the other, the moral wilderness around us may be lighted up and fertilized; and we may be made to witness both a holier Sabbath and purer week-days than heretofore, in all our parishes. If, in virtue of the missionary doings abroad, we read that hundreds of

families in some before untrodden field of heathenism have been Christianized—let us not forget, that many are the cities of our own island, where, without one mile of locomotion, we might have converse with thousands of families, which, but for the same doings at home, would be sunk in the apathy and the grossness of practical heathenism. If, as the fruit of the one service, we can appeal to humanized savages, and rudest wanderers of the desert, transformed into Christian and companionable men—let not the splendour of this achievement eclipse the equal importance of the other service, if we can appeal to an effectiveness as mighty and momentous, in our own cottage patriarchs, our own virtuous and well-taught peasantry.

Now, we think it is not by a fanciful but by a sound generalization, that we pass from the case of a home-mission to that of an establishment—which is neither more nor less, in fact, than a universal home-mission. At its first institution, in the days of Constantine, the very work remained to be done which we have now specified. Its proper object is not to extend Christianity into ulterior spaces, but thoroughly to fill up the space that had been already occupied. It is a far mightier achievement than may appear at first view, completely to overtake the whole length and breadth of a land. All the itinerancies and the traverse movements of the many thousand missionaries, who, during the three first centuries, lived and died in the cause, fell short of this accomplishment. They did much in the work of spreading the gospel externally; but they left much undone in the work of spreading it internally. They had Christianized the thousands who lived in cities; but the millions of pagans or of peasantry who were yet unconverted, evince the country to have been everywhere a great moral fastness, which, till opened up by an establishment, would remain impregnable. Now this very opening was presented to the ministers of Christ, when the Roman Emperor, whether by a movement of faith or a movement of philanthropy and patriotism, made territorial distribution of these over his kingdoms and provinces; and, assigning a territorial revenue for the labourers of this extensive vineyard, enabled each to set himself down in his own little vicinity—the families of which he could assemble to the exercises of Christian piety on the Sabbath, and among whom he could expatiate through the week in all the offices and attentions of Christian kindness. Such an offer, whether Christianly or but politically made upon the one side, could most Christianly be accepted and

rejoiced in by the other. It extended inconceivably the powers and the opportunities of usefulness. It brought the gospel of Jesus Christ into contact with myriads more of imperishable spirits; and with as holy a fervour as ever gladdened the heart of the devoted missionary, when the means of an ampler service to the Redeemer's cause were put into his hands, might the church in these days have raised to heaven its orisons of purest gratitude, that kings at length had become its nursing fathers, and opened up to it the plenteous harvest of all their population. There is just as little of the essentially corrupt in this connexion between the church and the state, as there is in the connexion between a missionary board and its pecuniary supporters. Each is a case of the Earth helping the Woman; but whatever of earthliness may be upon the one side, there might be none, and there needs be none, upon the other. The one may assist in things temporal—while the other may continue to assert its untouched and entire jurisdiction, as heretofore, in things spiritual. There might thus be an alliance between the Altar and the Throne—yet without the feculence of any earthly intermixture being at all engendered by it. The state avails itself of the church's services; and the church gives back again no other than the purest services of the sanctuary. Its single aim, as heretofore, is the preparation of citizens for heaven; but, in virtue of the blessings which Christianity scatters in its way, do the princes of this world find that these are the best citizens of earth—and that the cheap defence of nations, the best safeguard of their prosperity and their power, is a universal Christian education. There needs be nought, we repeat, of contamination in this. The state pays the church; yet the church, in the entire possession of all those privileges and powers which are strictly ecclesiastical, maintains the integrity of her faith and worship notwithstanding. She might be the same hallowed church, as when the fires of martyrdom were blazing around her—the same spirituality among her ministers—the same lofty independence in all her pulpits. The effect of an establishment is not necessarily to corrupt Christianity, but to extend it—not necessarily to vitiate the ministrations of the gospel, but certainly to disseminate those ministrations more intimately amongst, as well as to bear them more diffusively abroad over the families of the land.

But just as in philosophy and politics, there are mistakes upon this subject of a religious establishment, from the very common error of not assigning the right effect to its right cause.

There is a kind of vague and general imagination, as if corruption were the invariable accompaniment of such an alliance between the civil and the ecclesiastical; and this has been greatly fostered by the tremendously corrupt Popery which followed in historical succession after the establishment of Christianity in the days of Constantine, and which certainly holds out in vivid contrast the difference between this religion in the period of its suffering, and this religion in the period of its security and triumph. But it were well to discriminate the precise origin of this frightful degeneracy. It arose not from without; it arose from within. It was not because of any ascendancy by the state over the church whom it now paid, and thereby trenched upon its independence in things spiritual. It was because of an ascendancy by the church over the state, the effect of that superstitious terror which it wielded over the imaginations of men, and which it most unworthily prosecuted to the usurpation of power in things temporal. The fear that many have of an establishment is, lest through it the state should obtain too great power over the church, and so be able to graft its own secularity or its own spirit of worldliness, on the pure system of the gospel—whereas the actual mischief of Popery lay in the church having obtained too great power over the state; and in the false doctrines which it devised to strengthen and perpetuate a temporal dominion which should never have been permitted to it. There is no analogy between the apprehended evils to Christianity from an establishment now-a-days, and the actual evils inflicted on Christianity by the corrupt and audacious hierarchy of Rome. The thing dreaded from that connexion between the church and state which an establishment implies, is lest the state, stepping beyond its own legitimate province, should make invasion upon the church; and so, by a heterogeneous ingredient from without, in some way adulterate the faith. The thing experienced, on the contrary, was that the church, stepping beyond its legitimate province, made an invasion upon the state; and all the adulteration practised, either on the worship or the lessons of Christianity, was gendered from within. So far from the state having too much power, so that it could make unlawful invasion on the church—it had too little power, so that it could not resist the unlawful invasion made by the church upon itself. The theoretical fear is, lest the state should meddle with the prerogatives of the church; the historical fact is, that the church meddled with the prerogative of the state. So far from the

apprehended corruption having experience to rest upon, it is precisely the reverse—of the actual corruption. But the truth is, that after many conflicts the matter is now better understood; and the understanding is, that neither should meddle with the prerogatives of the other. The state may pay the church; yet without conceding to it one particle of temporal sovereignty. The church may serve the state; yet without the surrender of one spiritual prerogative. To teach the people Christianity—that is the church's service. To teach them no other than what itself judges to be the Christianity of the Bible—that is the church's prerogative. To deal out among our parish families the lessons of faith and of holiness—this is the church's incumbent duty. But that these shall be no other than what itself judges to be the very lessons of that Scripture whose guidance in things spiritual it exclusively follows, and that in this judgment no power on earth shall control it—this is the church's inviolable privilege. The state might maintain a scholastic establishment; but, without charging itself with the methods of ordinary education, leave these to the teachers. Or the state might maintain an ecclesiastical establishment; but, without charging itself with the methods of Christian education, leave these to the church. In both cases it would multiply and extend over the land the amount of instruction. Yet the kind of instruction it might leave to other authorities, to other boards of management than its own; and this were the way to secure the best scholarship and the best Christianity. For the sake of an abundant gospel dispensation we are upheld in things temporal by the state. For the sake of a pure gospel dispensation we are left in things spiritual to ourselves; and on ourselves alone does it depend, whether the church now might not be the same saintly and unsullied church that it was in the days of martyrdom—as spiritual in its creed, as purely apostolic in its spirit, as holy in all its services.

We will not allege the infallibility of our own church; for this were Popery though in the dress of Protestantism. We will not contend for the wisdom and the rectitude of all its doings; for we hold that there is neither individual nor corporate perfection upon the earth. But let the distinction be made between the acts of an establishment and the powers of an establishment; and we know not, if, through the whole of Christendom, there be one more happily devised in any other country for the religious good of its population. The fitness of a machine is one thing;

the working of it is another. We feel as if it were no more than a warrantable confidence, when we stand up for the former—though we should feel it a most tremendous presumption, did we, in every instance and upon all occasions, stand up for the latter. In regard to the fitness of the mechanism, it may be the best possible. In regard the actual working of the mechanism, one would need to side with all the majorities which have occurred for two centuries, and under all the changes of ecclesiastical policy, ere he could conscientiously affirm that it has at all times been the best possible. Still, amid all the imputations and the errors which its greatest enemies may have laid to its door, we hold, that, upon the alternative of its existence or non-existence, there would hang a most fearful odds to the Christianity of Scotland. Let us admit it as true, that the apparatus might be made greatly more effective,—still it is true that a deadly effect would follow, and be felt to her remotest parishes, were the apparatus taken down. It were tantamount to a moral blight over the length and breadth of our land; and though we have not time to demonstrate, what now we have only time to affirm—yet, with all the certainty of experimental demonstration we say it, that the ministrations of our church then done away would never be replaced, to within a tenth of their efficacy, by all the zeal and energy and talent of private adventurers. There would arise no compensation for the present regular supply. There would arise no compensation for its fulness. Instead of the frequent Parish Church (that most beautiful of all spectacles to a truly Scottish heart, because to him the richest in moral association; and to whom therefore its belfry, peeping forth from among the thick verdure of the trees which embosom it, is the sweetest and the fairest object in the landscape)—instead of this, we should behold the bare and thinly-scattered meeting-houses. For the large intervening spaces, we should have nothing but precarious and transient itinerancies to trust to. The well-established habit of Sabbath attendance, now as constant with many of our families as the weekly recurrence of the parish bell, would necessarily disappear. In a moral sense, they would become the waste and the howling wildernesses of Scotland. We feel quite assured, that, under this withering deprivation, a hard and outlandish aspect would gather on the face of our people. The cities might be somewhat served as heretofore, but the innumerable hamlets would be forsaken; and, just as it was anterior to an establishment at all, our peasants would again

become Pagans, or, under the name and the naked ritual of Christianity, would sink into the blindness and the brutality and the sad alienation of Paganism.

But, without enlarging on this consideration, in which however there lies much of the strength of our cause, let us briefly recur to the leading argument of the day. It is not true that corruption must adhere, in virtue of its very nature and as by necessity, to an establishment. There will be corruption in fact; but, rightly to estimate the quarter it comes from, distinction should be made between the nature of the institution and the nature of man. In virtue of the former, there may be no contamination; while in virtue of the latter, there may be a great deal. An establishment may in this case be the occasional, but not the efficient cause of mischief. The machine may be faultless; but exposed, as it must be, while the species lasts, to the intromission of hands, which to a certain degree will taint and vitiate all that they come in contact with. The remedy is not to demolish the machine, and transfer the hands which wrought it to other managements and other modes of operation—There will still be corruption notwithstanding. It will prove a vain attempt at escape, if you think to make it good by transferring human nature from the economy of an establishment to the economy of any of our sectaries. The human nature which you thus transfer, will carry its own virus along with it; and while that nature remains, there will be corruption in both, and which is strictly chargeable neither on the one economy nor on the other. It follows not therefore, because of this one or that other abuse, that the framework of our establishment should be destroyed. To make head against an abuse, we should direct our efforts to the place where the abuse originated—not to the machinery therefore in the present instance but to the men who work the machinery. It is not to a constitutional or political change in any of our establishments, that we should look for the coming regeneration of our land. It is to a moral and spiritual change in those who administer them. It is there, and not in the framework, where the change and the correction ought to be made. This is the way by which to get rid of corruption, and not by putting forth upon our national institutions the innovating hand of a destroyer. There is corruption in the civil government of our empire—yet that is no reason why it should be brought to dissolution. There is corruption in the municipal government of our towns—yet what fearful anarchy would ensue,

should that be made the pretext for another overthrow; and every populous community in our land were left without a presiding magistracy to check and to control them. There is corruption, we will say it, in every family government throughout the nation—yet who can tell the numerous ills that would fester in every household, and flow over in innumerable streams upon society, were the rights and the restraints of parental authority therefore put an end to? And there may be corruption in the ecclesiastical government of our own church. This may be true, and yet it be just as true, that if, either by the policy of infatuated rulers or by the frenzy of an infatuated people, this church were swept away—it would inflict a most deleterious blow on the character of Scotland and the Christianity of Scotland's families. It is not by the violence of public hostility against our church that the nation is to be reformed—it is rather by the control of the public opinion upon her ministers; and most of all, by the answer from Heaven to the people's prayers, that her priests may be clothed with salvation. Were the establishment, and that, too, under the pretext of its corruption, destroyed—this would do nothing, and worse than nothing. Were the establishment, either in the whole or in certain parts of its constitution reformed—this, of itself, would do little; and so little, as to stamp insignificance on many a contest of ecclesiastical policy. Were the establishment to have the Spirit of God poured forth upon its clergy—then, with the multiplication of its churches and parishes made more commensurate to the wants of our increasing population—this, and this alone, would do everything. A conscientious minister, even with the establishment precisely as it is, has within its borders, the liberty and the privilege of unbounded usefulness. He has scope and outlet there, for the largest desires of Christian philanthropy. He has a parish within which he might multiply his assiduities at pleasure; and with no other control but of the Word of God over his doctrines and his services and his prayers. Should he quarrel with the reigning policy of our church, he has a place for the utterance of his testimony against all he might esteem to be its defections and its errors. He can give his eloquence and his vote to the strength of its minorities. He can, by the contribution of his own name, and of his own proclaimed or recorded opinion, add to the moral force which always lies in an opposition of principle, and which numbers cannot overbear. All this he may do, and without forfeiting the respect, nay even



the kindness, of his adversaries. But to go back from the courts of our establishment to its parishes, where after all he is on his best vantage-ground for the services of Christian patriotism, he can there expatiate without restraint in all the deeds and the devices of highest usefulness. It is on this precious homewalk of piety and peace, that he can acquit himself of his noblest ministrations for the interests of our immortal nature, and the good of human society. It is there where he sheds the purest influences around him, whether by the holiness of his pulpit or the kindness of his household ministrations. I cannot imagine a stronger yet happier ascendant, than that which belongs to a parish minister, who, throned in the cordialities of his people, finds unbounded welcome at every cottage door; and, by his unwearied attention at sicknesses and deaths and funerals, has implicated the very sound of his name and idea of his person with the dearest interests of families. We positively know not, if anywhere else than under this mild patriarchal economy, a scene of so much moral loveliness can be found—or one where the hopes of heaven, and the best and kindest affections of earth, are so beautifully blended to uphold a system which covers all the land with so bland and benignant an economy as this, may well be termed “the cheap defence of the nation.” To uproot it, is the Gothic imagination of certain unfeeling calculators, whose sole principle, in the science of their politics, is a heartless arithmetic; but who, in the midst of their plodding computations, have overlooked what that is which constitutes the chief element of a nation’s prosperity and a nation’s greatness.

It is our part to vindicate the worth and importance of a church establishment to society; and this is best done by the worth and importance of our services. This will form our best security, infinitely better than any which statesmen can devise. There were certain recent alarms in which I could not participate, because I felt that any apprehended danger from without, might be greatly more than counteracted by a moral defence from within. This is the reaction by which we have hitherto stood our ground, against infidelity on the one hand and sectarianism on the other; and with such an effect, that, with enough of energy and conscientiousness and enlightened zeal on the part of her ministers, all the menaces and agitation by which we are surrounded, will only rivet the Church of Scotland more firmly upon her basis, and rally more closely around her cause the wise and the good of our nation.

In regard to an establishment, it makes all the difference in the world to a conscientious man, whether it exposes the church to the evil of an overbearing constraint from without; or, in common with every other Christian society, to the evil of a spontaneous corruption from within its own bosom. If not to the former, he may carry entire into the establishment, all his powers and his liberty of usefulness. If only to the latter, he may personally have no share in the corruption; and politically, if such be the constitution of the church that he is vested with the privilege, he may resist, and if overcome, may lift his testimony against it. In all these respects, we know of nothing more perfect than the constitution of the Church of Scotland. There is, to each of its members, an independent voice from within; and from without there is no force or authority whatever in matters ecclesiastical. They who feel dislike to an establishment, do so in general because of their recoil from all contact and communication with the state. We have no other communication with the state than that of being maintained by it—after which we are left to regulate the proceedings of our great home mission, with all the purity and the piety and the independence of any missionary board. We are exposed to nothing from without which can violate the sanctity of the apostolical character, if ourselves do not violate it. And neither are we exposed to aught, which can trench on the authority of the apostolical office, if ourselves we make no surrender of it. In things ecclesiastical we decide all. Some of these things may be done wrong; but still they are our majorities which do it. They are not, they cannot, be forced upon us from without. We own no head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever is done ecclesiastically is done by our ministers, acting in His name, and in professed submission to His authority. Implicated as the church and the state are imagined to be, they are not so implicated, as that, without the concurrence of the ecclesiastical courts, a full and final effect can be given to any proceeding, by which the good of Christianity and the religion of our people may be affected. There is not a clerical appointment, which can take place in any of our parishes, till we have sustained it. Even the law of patronage, right or wrong, is in force not by the power of the state, but by the permission of the church; and, with all its fancied omnipotence, has no other basis than that of our majorities to rest upon. It should never be forgotten, that, in things ecclesiastical, the highest power of our

church is amenable to no higher power on earth for its decisions. It can exclude, it can deprive, it can depose at pleasure. External force might make an obnoxious individual the holder of a benefice; but there is no external force in these realms, that could make him a minister of the Church of Scotland: There is not one thing which the state can do to our independent and indestructible church, but strip her of its temporalities. "*Nec tamen consumebatur*," she would remain a church notwithstanding—stronger than ever, in the props of her own moral and inherent greatness; and, at least strong as ever, in the reverence of her country's population—she was as much a church in her days of suffering, as in her days of outward security and triumph—when a wandering outcast, with nought but the mountain breezes to play around her, and nought but the caves of the earth to shelter her, as now when admitted to the bowers of an establishment. The magistrate might withdraw his protection; and she cease to be an establishment any longer—but in all the high matters of sacred and spiritual jurisdiction, she would be the same as before. With or without an establishment, she, in these, is the unfettered mistress of her doings. The King by himself, or by his representative, might be a looker-on; but more, the King cannot, the King dare not.

But we gladly bring our argument to a close. It has been well remarked, that, in the abstract discussion of rights between which there may be collision, it is difficult to avoid a certain tone of harshness—a spirit the most unlike possible to that which should be, and indeed to that which actually is, in real and living exemplification. The vindication of our establishment, as far as we have proceeded in it, necessarily involves the vindication of our order from the charge—that, because supported by the state, we are therefore, as if by necessary consequence, a mean and mercenary priesthood. In repelling this, we cannot but assert the real independence which belongs to us; but let not the assertion of our independence be interpreted into an assertion of disrespect or defiance. What we say and say truly in the abstract, may in the concrete be never realized; and for this best and most desirable of all reasons, that the one party might never be put on the hardy and resolute defence of its prerogative, just because the other party may never have the wish or the thought to invade it. There is many an ancient and venerable possession in our land, whose rights are never called forth from their depository, or produced in court—

just because they are never trampled on. And so of the rights of our church—there might be no call for the parade or for the production of them, just because there might be no contest; and we are left to the undisturbed exercise of every power which legitimately belongs to us. It is thus that for centuries, nay for a whole millennium, we can imagine a prosperous and a pacific union, between the church on the one hand and the state upon the other—a union most fruitful in blessings to both—the church rendering to the state that most precious of all services, the rearing of a virtuous and orderly and loyal population; and the state giving tenfold extent and efficacy to the labours of the church, by multiplying and upholding its stations all over the lands, and providing it in fact with approaches to the door of every family. There is here no compromise of sound principle on the part of the church—for it is not in drivelling submission to the authority of man, it is in devout submission to the high authority of Heaven, that we tell our people to honour the king, to obey magistrates, to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, and meddle not with them who are given to change. Neither is there any compromise of sound policy on the part of the state—for the Christian education of the people is the high road to all the best objects of patriotism. In such an intercourse of benefits as this, there needs not, we repeat it, be so much as a taint of worldliness. We may retain entire our apostolic fervour and our apostolic simplicity notwithstanding—pure as in the season of our most dark and trying ordeals—equally pure in the sunshine of blandness and cordiality, between a Christian church and an enlightened Government.

## SERMON XII.

*(Preached in St. George's Church, Edinburgh, on Sabbath, Feb. 20, 1831.)\**

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. DR. ANDREW THOMSON.

“He being dead yet speaketh.”—HEBREWS xi. 4.

THERE is one sense in which this text admits the utmost generality of application. Every man who dies, speaks a lesson to survivors—even that lesson which is the oftenest told, but which is also the oftenest forgotten. There is on this subject a cleaving and a constitutional earthliness which stands its ground against every demonstration—giving way for a moment perhaps at each of the successive instances, but recovering itself on the instant when the scenes, and the companionships, and the business of the world again close around us. We are the creatures of sense, and the present, the sensible world is the only one that we practically acknowledge. Carnality is the scriptural term for this disease of fallen humanity—a disease of marvellous inveteracy and force; and not to be dislodged, we fear, by any assault whatever, whether ordinary or extraordinary, on the mere sensibilities of nature. We are never more assured, that to translate a man from the walk of sight to the walk of faith, is a work of supernatural energy, than when we witness the impotency of all natural appliances, and how the spell which binds him to the world is not to be broken by the loudest and most emphatic warnings of the world's vanity. A rooted preference of the interests of time to the interests of eternity—this is what arithmetic may disprove, but it is what arithmetic cannot dissipate. This is what the pathos and power of some affecting visitation may suspend, but which no visitation can ultimately quell; and after a brief season of sighs, and sensibilities, and tears, the man emerges again to as whole-hearted a secularity as before. Thus it is, that the thousand funerals which from childhood to age he may have attended, have only

\* See “Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers,” vol. ii. pp. 227-232, cheap edition.

cradled him into a profounder spiritual lethargy; and that the frequent wrecks of mortality, through which he has ploughed his way on the ocean of life, have only stamped a sort of weather-beaten hardihood upon his soul. The man is more and more seasoned as it were, by every repetition of death, against its terrors, till at last himself dies in deep and hopeless apathy.

Such, we fear, is mainly the sad history of the world throughout its successive generations. Such is the infatuation of men walking in a vain show; and only more confirmed by every instance of death in false and fatal security. There is no question it ought to be otherwise. Every partaker of our nature who dies, should impressively remind us of our own mortality. Every exemplification of the unsparing and universal law, should be borne homeward in pointed and personal application to ourselves. There is not a human creature however insignificant, who, simply by the act of expiring, should not speak to us in accents of deepest seriousness; and tell, with an eloquence not to be resisted, of our own approaching end, our own sudden arrest or dying agonies. All the tokens and mementoes of death should have this effect upon us—as every funeral bell, every open grave, every procession that day after day moves along our streets, and scarcely arrests the eye of the heedless passenger. Nor is it necessary that he should be a man of rank, or talent, or commanding influence, or wide and general popularity, who is thus borne along. Enough, if he be flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. The humblest of menials is fitted to be our monitor on such an occasion. Even he when dead speaketh; and if he do not effectually convince, he will at least most emphatically condemn.

I need not say to this assembly of mourners, in what more striking and impressive form the lesson has been given to us. It is just as if death had wanted to make the highest demonstration of his sovereignty, and for this purpose had selected as his mark him who stood the foremost, and the most conspicuous in the view of his countrymen. I speak not at present of any of the relations in which he stood to the living society immediately around him—to the thousands in church whom his well-known voice reached upon the Sabbath—to the tens of thousands in the city, whom, through the week, in the varied rounds and meetings of Christian philanthropy, he either guided by his counsel or stimulated by his eloquence. You know, over and

above, how far the wide, and the wakeful, and the untired benevolence of his nature carried him ; and that, in the labours and the locomotions connected with these, he may be said to have become the personal acquaintance of the people of Scotland. Insomuch that there is not a village in the land, where the tidings of his death have not conveyed the intimation that a master in Israel has fallen ; and, I may also add, that such was the charm of his companionship, such the cordiality lighted up by his presence in every household, that connected with this death, there is at this moment an oppressive sadness in the hearts of many thousands even of our most distant Scottish families. And so a national lesson has been given forth by this event, even as a national loss has been incurred by it. It is a public death in the view of many spectators. And when one thinks of the vital energy by which every deed and every utterance were pervaded—of that prodigious strength which but gamboled with the difficulties that would have so depressed and overborne other men—of that prowess in conflict, and that promptitude in counsel with his fellows—of that elastic buoyancy which ever rose with the occasion, and bore him onward and upward to the successful termination of his cause—of the weight and multiplicity of his engagements ; and yet, as if nothing could overwork that colossal mind, and that robust framework, the perfect lightness and facility wherewith all was executed—when one thinks, in the midst of these powers and these performances, how intensely he laboured, I had almost said, how intensely he lived, in the midst of us, we cannot but acknowledge that death, in seizing upon him, hath made full proof of a mastery that sets all the might and all the promise of humanity at defiance.

But while in no possible way could general society have, through means of but one individual example, been more impressively told of the power of death—to you, in particular, it is a lesson of deepest pathos. The world at large can form no estimate of the tenderness which belongs to the spiritual relationship, though I trust that on this topic, mysterious to them, yet familiar, I hope and believe, to many of you, I now speak to a goodly number who can own him as their spiritual father. But even they who are strangers to the power and reality of these things, may comprehend the growing attachment of hearers to the minister, who, Sabbath after Sabbath, imparts to them of his own mental wealth, and excites in them somewhat of his own moral and religious earnestness. Even, apart from all per-

sonal acquaintance or intercourse, a sympathy with the personal ministrations of the clergyman under whom you sit, often draws a very close and binding affinity along with it. The man with the very tones of whose voice you associate many of your most pleasing and hallowed recollections—the man to whom you feel yourselves indebted for the most delightful Sabbaths of other days—he who guided your devotions, and cleared away your difficulties, and pointed your path to heaven, and first opened the method of salvation, and, by his expostulations, and his arguments, was the instrument of determining you to forsake all, and follow after Christ—every Christian can tell, that to that man there attaches an interest of no ordinary tenderness and force. Even a general and unconverted hearer may share in this affection—although only his understanding was regaled by the pulpit demonstration; or his imagination by its splendour and eloquence; or his conscience, so far impressed as at least to recognise the general truth of the principles, and the perfect moral honesty and earnestness of him who urges and expounds them. The man who is frank and fearless and able, and, above all, whose heart was fully charged with what may be called the brotherhood of our nature; whose every look and utterance bespoke the strength of his own convictions, and the intensity of his zeal to plant them in the bosoms of other men—that man would, in the course of months or of years, become the general friend of the multitude whom he addresses; apart from all separate converse and fellowship with the individuals who compose it. Though only the pulpit acquaintance, and not at all the personal of the many hundreds who listen to him, yet in this capacity alone might he obtain a mighty hold of their affections notwithstanding. At once the soul and mouth of the congregation, he is on high vantage-ground for such an ascendancy. He speaks as it were from a pre-eminence, and, having all the moral forces of the gospel at command, it is incalculable with what sure and general effect, a minister even of ordinary talents, if but of acknowledged honesty and worth, can subdue the people under him. But his was no ordinary championship; and although the weapons of our spiritual warfare are the same in every hand, we all know that there was none who wielded them more vigorously than he did, or who, with such an arm of might and voice of resistless energy, carried, as if by storm, the convictions of his people. That such an arm should now be motionless, that such a voice should be for ever hushed in deep and



unbroken silence, is to all a thought of profoundest melancholy. But he was the special property of his hearers, and to them it comes far more urgently and impressively home, than does any general object of touching or tragic contemplation. To them it is a personal bereavement—and whether or not on the terms with him of individual converse, they droop and are in heaviness, because of their now widowed Sabbaths, their bereft and desolated sanctuary.

But the lesson is prodigiously enhanced, when we pass from his pulpit to his household ministrations. I perhaps do him wrong, in supposing that any large proportion of his hearers did not know him personally—for such was his matchless superiority to fatigue, such the unconquerable strength and activity of his nature, that he may almost be said to have accomplished a sort of personal ubiquity among his people. But ere you can appreciate the whole effect of this, let me advert to a principle of very extensive operation in nature. Painters know it well. They are aware how much it adds to the force and beauty of any representation of theirs, when made strikingly and properly to contrast with the background on which it is projected. And the same is as true of direct nature, set forth in one of her own immediate scenes, as of reflex nature, set forth by the imagination and pencil of an artist. This is often exemplified in those Alpine wilds, where beauty may, at times, be seen embosomed in the lap of grandeur—as when, at the base of a lofty precipice, some spot of verdure, or peaceful cottage-home, seems to smile in more intense loveliness, because of the towering strength and magnificence which are behind it. Apply this to character, and think how precisely analogous the effect is—when, from the groundwork of a character that, mainly, in its texture and general aspect is masculine, there do effloresce the forth-puttings of a softer nature, and those gentler charities of the heart, which come out irradiated in tenfold beauty, when they arise from a substratum of moral strength and grandeur underneath. It is thus, when the man of strength shows himself the man of tenderness; and he who, sturdy and impregnable in every righteous cause, makes his graceful descent to the ordinary companionships of life, is found to mingle, with kindred warmth, in all the cares and the sympathies of his fellow-men. Such, I am sure, is the touching recollection of very many who now hear me, and who can tell, in their own experience, that the vigour of his pulpit was only equalled by the fidelity and the tenderness of

his household ministrations. They understand the whole force and significancy of the contrast I have now been speaking of—when the pastor of the church becomes the pastor of the family; and he who, in the crowded assembly, held imperial sway over every understanding, entered some parent's lowly dwelling, and prayed and wept along with them over their infant's dying bed. It is on occasions like these when the minister carries to its highest pitch the moral ascendancy which belongs to his station. It is this which furnishes him with a key to every heart—and, when the triumphs of charity are superadded to the triumphs of argument, then it is that he sits enthroned over the affections of a willing people.

But I dare not venture any further on this track of observation. While yet standing aghast at a death which has come upon us all with the rapidity of a whirlwind, it might be easy, by means of a few touching and graphic recollections, to raise a tempest of emotion in the midst of you. It might be easy to awaken, in vivid delineation to the view of your mind, him who but a few days ago trod upon the streets of our city with the footsteps of firm manhood; and took part, with all his accustomed earnestness and vigour, in the busy concerns of living men. We could image forth the intense vitality which beamed in every look, and kept up, to the last moment, the incessant play of a mind that was the fertile and ever-eddyng fountain of just and solid thoughts. We could ask you to think of that master-spirit, with what presiding efficacy, yet with what perfect lightness and ease, he moved among his fellow-men; and, whether in the hall of debate, or in the circles of private conviviality, subordinated all to his purposes and views. We could fasten your regards on that dread encounter, when Death met this most powerful and resolute of men upon his way, and, laying instant arrest upon his movements, held him forth, in view of the citizens, as the proudest, while the most appalling of his triumphs. We could bid you weep at the thought of his agonized family—or rather, hurrying away from this big and unsupportable distress, we would tell of the public grief and the public consternation, and how the tidings of some great disaster flew from household to household, till, under the feeling of one common and overwhelming bereavement, the whole city became a city of mourners. We could recall to you that day when the earth was committed to the earth from which it came; and the deep seriousness that sat on every countenance bespoke, not the

pageantry, but the whole power and reality of wo. We could point to his closing sepulchre, and read to you there the oft-repeated lesson of man's fading and evanescent glories. But we gladly, my brethren, we gladly make our escape from all these images, and all these sentiments, of oppressive melancholy. We would fain take refuge in other views, and betake ourselves to some other direction. What I should like, if I could accomplish it, were to take a calm and deliberate survey of a character, the exposition of which would, in fact, be the exposition of certain great principles, that I might hold up to your reverence and your practical imitation. It is thus, in fact, that he, though dead, yet speaks unto you. In attempting the office of an interpreter between the dead and the living, I feel the whole difficulty of the task which has been put into my hands; and I have to crave the indulgence of my fellow-mourners for one, who, after a preparation of infirmity and sorrow, now addresses them in fear, and in weakness, and with much trembling.

My observations will resolve themselves into two heads—the *character of the theologian*, and the *character of the man*: and in the prosecution of which, I trust that both the influences of sound doctrine and of sound example may be brought to bear upon you.

First, then, in briefest possible definition, his was the olden theology of Scotland. A thoroughly devoted son of our Church, he was, through life, the firm, the unflinching advocate of its articles, and its formularies, and its rights, and the whole polity of its constitution and discipline. His creed he derived, by inheritance, from the fathers of the Scottish Reformation—not, however, as based on human authority, but as based and upholden on the authority of Scripture alone. Its two great articles are—Justification, only by the righteousness of Christ—Sanctification, only by that Spirit which Christ is commissioned to bestow—the one derived to the believer by faith; the other derived by faith too, because obtained and realized in the exercise of believing prayer. This simple and sublime theology, connecting the influences of Heaven with the moralities of earth, did the founders of our Church incorporate, by their catechisms, with the education of the people; and, through the medium of a clergy, who maintained their orthodoxy and their zeal for several generations, was it faithfully and efficiently preached in all the parishes of the land. The whole system originated in deepest piety; and has resulted in the formation of the most moral and

intelligent peasantry in Europe. Yet, in spite of this palpable evidence in its favour, it fell into discredit. Along with the elegant literature of our sister country, did the meagre Arminianism of her church make invasion among our clergy; and we certainly receded for a time from the good old way of our forefathers. This was the middle age of the Church of Scotland, an age of cold and feeble rationality, when Evangelism was derided as fanatical, and its very phraseology was deemed an ignoble and vulgar thing, in the upper classes of society. A morality without godliness—a certain prettiness of sentiment, served up in tasteful and well-turned periods of composition—the ethics of Philosophy, or of the academic chair, rather than the ethics of the gospel—the speculations of Natural Theology, and perhaps an ingenious and scholar-like exposition of the credentials, rather than a faithful exposition of the contents of the New Testament—These for a time dispossessed the topics of other days, and occupied that room in our pulpits, which had formerly been given to the demonstrations of sin, and of the Saviour. You know there has been a reflux. The tide of sentiment has been turned; and there is none who has given it greater momentum, or borne it more triumphantly along, than did the lamented pastor of this congregation. His talents and his advocacy have thrown a lustre around the cause. The prejudices of thousands have given way before the might and the mastery of his resistless demonstrations. The evangelical system has of consequence risen, has risen prodigiously of late years, in the estimation of general society—connected to a great degree, we doubt not, under the blessing of God, with his powerful appeals to Scripture, and his no less powerful appeals to the consciences of men.

But in the doing of this great service to the Christianity of the nation, he has laid you, his individual hearers, under a heavy load of responsibility for yourselves. You will never forget, I trust, either the terror of his loud and emphatic denunciations; or what is still more persuasive, the urgency of his beseeching voice. You will remember the powerful and the pleading earnestness wherewith he hath so often dealt forth upon you the impressive simplicities of the gospel—as that Christ is the only Saviour; and the way of His prescribed holiness the only road to a blissful immortality. Your personal Christianity, my brethren, would be his best and noblest memorial—the most satisfactory evidence, that through the organs of recollection and conscience, he was still speaking to you. Often hath he plied you with the

warnings of Scripture; and now God Himself hath interposed, and superadded to these the solemn warning of Providence. He hath recalled His ambassador, and you will soon follow him to the reckoning—him to give account of his ministry; and you, on this principle of gospel equity, that to whom much is given, of him much will be required—you to give account of the fruit of his ministrations.

I can afford to say no more on the character of his theology—but, additional to this and distinct from this, I would speak of what I term a characteristic of his theology. I beg you will attend for a moment to the difference of these two. The character is general, and that which he had in common with the members of a class—the characteristic is special, or that by which his own individual theology was signalized, and by which I think it was ennobled. Could I make myself intelligible on this matter, it might furnish a cipher for the explanation of what many have called his peculiarities; but, instead of which, you would at once see the great and the high principle which gave birth to them all.

The indispensable brevity of this explanation, both adds to the difficulty of my task, and forms a call on your more strenuous and sustained attention to me.

There is a distinction made by moralists, between the determinate and the indeterminate virtues. I will not attempt to define, but I will illustrate this distinction by an example.

Justice is a determinate virtue, and why?—because the precise line which separates it from its opposite, admits of being drawn with rigid and arithmetical precision; and he who transgresses this line by the minutest fraction, is clearly and distinctly chargeable with injustice. It is thus that, in respect of this particular virtue, there may turn, on the difference of a single farthing, the utmost difference, or, I should rather say, the most distinct and diametric opposition between two characters. He who defrauds or steals, though but to the amount of a farthing, not only differs in degree, but differs in kind, or belongs to a distinct and opposite *genus* of character, from him whom no temptation could ever lead to swerve from the unbending and rectilinear course of virtue—who would recoil with the utmost moral determination and delicacy from the slightest deviation; and would feel as if principle had struck its surrender, and was now lying prostrate and degraded, should he enter by a single inch, or plant one foot-step on the forbidden territory.

Generosity, again, is an indeterminate virtue, and why?—because there is no such definite line of separation between this virtue and its counterpart vice, as that you could pass by instant transition from it to its opposite. It does not proceed by arithmetical differences of a farthing more or less. You could not, as in the place of distinction between justice and injustice, put your finger at the point where, in respect of this virtue of generosity, two men, by ever so little on the opposite sides of it, stood contrasted in diametric opposition to each other. The man who differs from his neighbour in withholding the farthing that is due, differs as much from him, as a vice does from its opposite virtue. The man who differs from his neighbour in withholding the farthing that would have brought his donation to an equality with the other's, only differs, not in kind but in degree and that very imperceptibly, being only a little less liberal, and a little less generous than his fellow. In the determinate virtue, one, by a single farthing or a single footstep, might pass from a state of pure and exalted morality to a state of crime. In the indeterminate, there is what painters would call a shading off—a melting of hues into each other—a slow and insensible graduation.

It is not, then, with a determinate, as with an indeterminate virtue. You cannot tamper with it, even to the extent of the humblest fraction, without making an entire sacrifice. It has its palpable and precise landmark; and you cannot permit the encroachment of a single hair-breadth, without a virtual giving up of the whole territory. This principle is fully recognised in the ethics of Scripture: "He who is unfaithful in the least, is unfaithful also in much." Who would ever think of doing away the turpitude or the disgracefulness of theft, by alleging the paltriness and insignificance of the thing stolen? It is thus that the little pilferments of household service; the countless peccadilloes which go on in the departments of business and confidential agency; the innumerable freedoms which are currently practised, and that without remorse, along the line which separates the just from the unjust—do bespeak a fearful relaxation of principle in society. And it is thus also, on the other hand, that the purest and most honourable virtue, even to the extent of a moral chivalry, may be exemplified in littles. And, on the reverse position, that "he who is faithful in the least, is faithful also in much," may the Christian domestic, in the perfect sacredness and safety of all that is committed to her, even to the

minutest articles of her custody and care, show forth the heroism of sublimest principle.

A determinate virtue can no more bear to be violated, even though only by one footstep of encroachment, than an independent country can bear an entrance upon its border, though only by half a mile, on the part of an invading army. It is enough, in either instance, if the line be only crossed, to call forth in the one case the remonstrances of offended principle, and, in the other, the resistance and the fire of indignant patriotism. In neither example, needs the material harm to have been of any sensible amount, that in both there might be the utmost feeling of a moral violence.

Before applying this principle to the object of appreciating the character of our dear and departed friend, let me remark, that Scripture, all over, is full of the principle, and full of the most striking and pertinent illustrations of it. "Thou mayest not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." This was a determinate prohibition—and by the eating, though it had only been of one apple, complete and conclusive outrage was done to it. The tree, uninjured by this act of disobedience, might, in the profusion of its golden clusters, have stood forth, to all appearance, in as great wealth and loveliness as before. But a definite commandment was broken; and therein it was that the whole damage and desecration lay. The jurisprudence of heaven was at stake; and so, on this solitary apple hinged the fate of our world. Infidels deride the history. Like those wretched arithmetical moralists, who make virtue an affair of product and not of principle, they are unable to see how the moral grandeur of the transaction just rises, in proportion to the humility of its material accompaniments; and so, in the event of our earth burdened with a curse to its latest generations, do we behold at once the truth of our principle, and terrible demonstration given to the unbroken sanctity of the Godhead.

And the same principle ever and anon breaks forth in the subsequent dealings of God with the world. Let me only instance from the history of Israel's entrance into the promised land. The silver and the gold that were taken from their enemies, were all to be brought as consecrated things into the treasury of the Lord. This was a determinate precept; and just because of one violation, the progress of the Jewish victories was arrested, and the frown of Heaven's offended authority

spread disaster and dismay over the hosts of Israel. It was Achan's accursed thing which distempered for a time, and was like to have blasted the whole undertaking. They were his goodly Babylonish garment, and wedge of gold, and two hundred shekels of silver—secreted in the midst of an otherwise immaculate camp—that called forth the resentment and the reckoning of a God of vengeance; and, not till the whole burden of this provocation was swept away—not till the offence, and the offending household, were taken forth from the midst of the congregation and destroyed—did God turn Him from the fierceness of His anger, or was the jealousy of Heaven appeased, because of the injury done to a commandment intact and inviolable.

And, lastly, what has been so often exemplified in the history of the Old, is alike exemplified in the doctrines and declarations of the New Testament. "A man," says the apostle, "is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." This is a determinate principle; but the judaizing Christians would fain have introduced one slight and circumstantial exception to it. They made a stand for the rite of circumcision; and were willing that all the other works of the law should be discharged from the matter of our justifying righteousness, were there only, along with the faith of Christ, a place found for this distinguishing ordinance of their nation. It is against this demand and predilection of the Jews that the apostle sets himself, in his Epistle to the Galatians—where he rejects the compromise; and proves, by admirable reasoning, that it would not only deform the faith of the Gospel, but destroy it.

Admit this, trifling though it may appear, and "Christ is dead in vain;" you have fallen from your dependence upon Him, and He has "become of no effect unto you." It is thus, that this bold, this uncompromising champion of the Church's purity, has bequeathed, in this epistle, a precious example to the Christian ministers of all ages. What Luther, after him, called the article of a standing or a falling church, is here defended from the contact and the contamination of every deleterious ingredient. The *matériel* of a sinner's justification with God, instead of being partitioned, as many would have it, between the righteousness of Christ and the righteousness of man, is strenuously contended for by the apostle in this argument, as being pure, unmixed, and homogeneous. The Epistle to the Galatians is a composition charged throughout with the very essence of prin-



ciple; and the thing to be noted is, that while in appearance Paul is only warding off from the religion of Christ a misplaced or incongruous ceremony, he embarks the whole of his apostolic strength and apostolic zeal upon the contest, and is, in fact, fighting for the foundations of the faith.

This will at once prepare you to understand, what I have taken the liberty of terming a characteristic of his theology, whose general character I have described as being the theology of the Church of Scotland. The peculiarity lay in this, that present him with a measure, and he, of all other men, saw at once, and with the force of instant discernment, the principle that was embodied in it. And did that principle belong to the class of the determinate, he furthermore saw, with every sound moralist before him, that he could not recede, by one inch or hair-breadth, from the assertion of it, without making a virtual surrender of the whole. The point of resistance, then, it is obvious, must be at the beginning of the mischief—or at that part in the border of the vineyard, where it first threatened to make inroad. It was there he planted his footstep; and there, with the might and prowess of a champion, did he ward off from our Church many a hurtful and withering contamination. His was never a puerile or unmeaning conflict—but a conflict of high moral elements. It was the warfare of a giant, enlisted on the side of some great principle; and, with a heart always in the right place, it was this which imparted a substantial rectitude to every cause, and threw a moral grandeur over all his controversies.

You are aware that no two things can be more dissimilar than a religion of points and a religion of principles. No one will suspect his of being a religion of senseless or unmeaning points. Altogether, there was a manhood in his understanding—a strength and a firmness in the whole staple of his mind, as remote as possible from whatever is weakly and superstitiously fanciful. It is therefore, you will find, that whenever he laid the stress of his zeal or energy on a cause—instead of a stress disproportionate to its importance, there was always the weight of some great, some cardinal principle underneath to sustain it. It is thus, that every subject he undertook was throughout charged with sentiment. The whole drift and doings of the man were instinct with it; and that, too, sentiment fresh from the word of God, or warm with generous enthusiasm for the best interests of the Church and of the species.

There is one peculiarity by which he was signalized above all his fellows; and which makes him an incalculable loss, both to the Church and to the country at large. We have known men of great power, but they wanted promptitude; and we have known men of great promptitude, but they wanted power. The former, if permitted to concentrate their energies on one great object, may, by dint of a riveted perseverance, succeed in its accomplishment—but they cannot bear to have this concentration broken up; and it is torture to all their habits, when assailed by the importunity of those manifold and miscellaneous applications, to which every public man is exposed, from the philanthropy of our modern day. The latter again—that is, they who have the promptitude but not the power, facility without force, and whose very lightness favours both the exceeding variety and velocity of their movements—why, they are alert and serviceable, and can acquit themselves in a respectable way of any slender or secondary part which is put into their hands; but then, they want predominance and momentum in any one direction to which they may betake themselves. But in him, never did such ponderous faculties meet with such marvellous power of wielding them at pleasure—insomuch, that even on the impulse of most unforeseen occasions, he could bring them immediately to bear, and that with sweeping and resistless effect, on the object before him. Such a combination of forces enlisted, as all within him was, on the side of Christianity, would have been of incalculable service in this our day. It is true, the land in which we live is yet free from the taint and the scandal of so gross an abomination; but you cannot fail to have remarked, how, mixed up with their rancorous politics, there have of late been the frequent outbreakings of a coarse and revolting impiety in the popular meetings of England. In the whole compass of the moral world, we know not a more hideous spectacle than plebeian infidelity, with its rude invectives, its savage and boisterous outcry against all the restraints and institutions of the gospel. If, indeed, our next war is to be a war of principles, then, before the battle is begun, the noblest of our champions has fallen. Yet we dare not give up in despondency, a cause which has truth for its basis, and the guarantee of Heaven's omnipotence for its complete and everlasting triumph. In this reeling of the nations, this gradual loosening of all spirits from the ancient holds of habit and of principle—still we cannot fear that the church, the one and indestructible church, though tossed and cradled in the storm, will not be

riveted more securely upon its basis. "We are distressed, but not in despair; troubled, yet not forsaken; cast down, yet not destroyed." "Help, Lord, when the godly man ceaseth, and the righteous fail from the children of men."

But let me again offer one word of special address to the members of his congregation. I have spoken of his resistance to compromise in all the great matters of Christian faith and Christian practice. Let me entreat, that though dead, he may still speak this lesson to you. I would rather, and I am quite sure that all along he would, that your security before God rested altogether on works, or altogether on grace, rather than that, like the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, partly of clay, and partly of iron, it rested on the motley foundation of two unlike and heterogeneous ingredients. Hold fast what you have gotten from him on this subject; and be assured, that if, forgetful of the decision and distinctness of his principles, you ever shall listen with pleasure to him who vacillates from the one to the other, or would attempt a composition between the righteousness of man and the righteousness of Christ—there is not a likelier method in which shipwreck can be made both of the faith and the piety of this congregation. And you know, that while none more clear and confident than he in preaching the dogmata of his creed, he was far, and very far from being a preacher of dogmata alone. You recollect his earnest enforcement of duty in all that concerned the relation between God and man, and in all that concerned the relations of human society. But it was duty bottomed on an evangelical groundwork—even on those deep and well-laid principles of belief, by which alone the righteousness of the life and practice is upholden. He was truly a preacher of faith—yet his last words in this pulpit may be regarded as his dying testimony to the worth of that charity which is greater than faith. I do not mean the charity of a mere contribution by the hand; but the charity of that love in the heart, which prompts to all the services of humanity.\*

I must now satisfy myself with a few slight and rapid touches on his character as a man. It is a subject I dare hardly approach. To myself, he was at all times a joyous, hearty, gallant, honourable, and out-and-out most trustworthy friend—while, in harmony with a former observation, there were beautifully projected on this broad and general groundwork, some of friendship's

\* His last sermon, preached with all his accustomed earnestness and zeal, was a pleading in behalf of the Infirmary of Edinburgh.

finest and most considerate delicacies. By far the most declared and discernible feature in his character, was a dauntless, and direct, and right-forward honesty, that needed no disguise for itself, and was impatient of aught like dissimulation or disguise in other men. There were withal a heart and a hilarity in his companionship, that everywhere carried its own welcome along with it; and there were none who moved with greater acceptance, or wielded a greater ascendant over so wide a circle of living society. Christianity does not overbear the constitutional varieties either of talent or of temperament. After the conversion of the apostles, their complexional differences of mind and character remained with them; and there can be no doubt that, apart from, and anterior to the influence of the gospel, the hand of nature had stamped a generosity, and a sincerity, and an openness on the subject of our description, among the very strongest of the lineaments which belong to him. Under an urgent sense of rectitude, he delivered himself with vigour and with vehemence, in behalf of what he deemed to be its cause—but I would have you to discriminate between the vehemence of passion and the vehemence of sentiment, which, like though they be in outward expression, are wholly different and dissimilar in themselves. His was, mainly, the vehemence of sentiment, which, hurrying him when it did, into what he afterwards felt to be excesses, were immediately followed up by the relentings of a noble nature. The pulpit is not the place for the idolatry of an unqualified panegyric on any of our fellow-mortals—but it is impossible not to acknowledge, that whatever might have been his errors, he was right at bottom—that truth, and piety, and ardent philanthropy formed the substratum of his character; and that the tribute was altogether a just one, when the profoundest admiration, along with the pungent regrets of his fellow-citizens, did follow him to his grave.

## SERMON XIII.

*(Delivered at the Opening of the Dean Church, near Edinburgh, May 15, 1836.)\**

## ON PREACHING TO THE COMMON PEOPLE.

“And the common people heard him gladly.”—MARK xii. 37.

Two discourses might be framed on this text—one addressed to the preachers of sermons, and another to the hearers of sermons. The great topic of the first should be the example of our Saviour as a preacher; and the great topic held out should be that He preached to the delight and acceptance of the common people. There is no doubt the vanity of popular applause; but there is also the vanity of an ambitious eloquence, which throws the common people at a distance from our instructions altogether; which, in laying itself out for the admiration of the tasteful and enlightened few, locks up the bread of life from the multitude; which destroys this essential attribute of the gospel, that it is a message of glad tidings to the poor; and wretchedly atones by the wisdom of words, for the want of those plain and intelligible realities which all may apprehend and by which all may be edified. Now the great aim of our ministry is to win souls; and the soul of a poor man consists of precisely the same elements with the soul of a rich. They both labour under the same disease, and they both stand in need of the same treatment. The physician who administers to their bodies brings forward the same application to the same malady; and the physician who is singly intent on the cure of their souls will hold up to both the same peace-speaking blood, and the same sanctifying Spirit, and will preach to both in the same name, because the only name given under heaven whereby men can be saved. If he do otherwise, then is he preaching himself, instead of giving an entire and honest aim to the management of the case that is before him; and does the same provoking injustice to his hearers with the physician who expends his visit in playing off the pedantry of

\* See “Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers,” vol. ii. p. 347, cheap edition.

airs and manners before the eyes of his agonizing patient—when he should be binding up his wounds, or letting him know in plain language a plain and practicable remedy.

We hear of the orator of fashion, the orator of the learned, the orator of the mob. A minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ should be none of these; and if an orator at all, it should be his distinction that he is an orator of the species. He should look beyond the accidental and temporary varieties of our condition; and recognise in every one who comes within his reach, the same affecting spectacle of a soul forfeited by sin, and that can only be restored by one Lord, one faith, one baptism. In the person of Nicodemus, it is likely, that both wealth and learning stood before the Saviour; but to His eye, these appear to have been paltry and perishable distinctions. He took up this case in precisely the same way that He would have done the case of one of the common people. They both laboured under the malignity of the same disease; and both, to be made meet for the inheritance, had to undergo the same regeneration. The varieties of fortune and accomplishment were of no importance at all in His argument. They were utterly insignificant as to the great purpose which He had in view. He reasoned on the great elements of flesh and spirit, in which rich and poor are alike implicated; and when He described the mighty transition from the one to the other, it was not a flowery path to heaven to which He pointed the eye of the Jewish ruler, to be trodden only by him and by his companions in fortune and in fine sentiment. It is the one and universal path for every son and daughter of Adam, who have all to undergo the same death, and to stand before the same judgment-seat, and to inherit their undying portion, whether of weal or of wo, in the same eternity. In the view and consideration of such mighty interests as these, we should give up the partial and insignificant distinctions of time and of society, between one member of the great human family and another. They are men and the souls of men that we have to deal with; and let it be our single aim to deal with them plainly, impressively, and faithfully.

It is true that ere we completed our lesson to the preachers of sermons, we behoved to advert to another principle, for which we have the sanction of apostolic example, even that of Paul, who was all things to all men, that he might gain some. But we must now hasten to address the hearers of sermons. It was saying more for the common people of Judea that they heard

the Saviour gladly, than for the Scribes and Pharisees who heard Him with envy, prejudice, and opposition; and it is saying more for the common people of this country, that they hear the doctrine of Christ gladly, than for those learned who call that doctrine foolishness, for those men of taste who call it fanaticism, for those men of this world who call it a methodistical reverie, for those men of fashion and fine sentiment who shrink from the peculiarities of our faith, with all the disgust of irritated pride and offended delicacy. What the common people of Judea were in reference to the rulers of Judea, many of the common people of our day are in reference to the majority, we fear, of those who are to be met with in the walks of genteel and cultivated life—the scoffers and Sabbath-breakers of the day, or the men perhaps who take a kind of religion along with them, but take it in moderation; who think that to strike the high tone of Christ and His apostles would be to carry the matter too far; who think that a great deal of what is said about sin and the sacrifice for sin is only meet for vulgar ears; who hear a sermon because it is decent to be exemplary; and who even read a sermon, and will read it to the end, if it carry them gently along through the rich and beauteous track of a polished composition; but who would be very ready to throw it aside, if it alarm too much their fears, or tell too much with energy upon their consciences. Now, we are willing to acquit those who are here present of all these unchristian peculiarities. We are willing to think that both the doctrine of Scripture and the language of Scripture are agreeable to you, and that you do not feel as if either the one or the other could be carried too far; that there is no false taste, no lofty imagination about you, disposing you to resist the fulness or simplicity of the New Testament; and that the voice of the preacher never falls more sweetly upon your ears, than when he tells of the great things which the Saviour hath done for you. Now, it is well that, like the common people of our text, you hear the word with gladness; but we want to impress it upon you that something more than this is indispensable. We are jealous over you, and we trust with a godly jealousy. We fear that there are many who are satisfied with a mere liking for the sound of Christian doctrine in their ears, while utter strangers to the influence of Christian doctrine in their hearts; who think it enough that they have a taste for the faith, while they give no proof of obedience to the faith; who are mere hearers of the word, but not doers of the word; who feel as if the great use of

a sermon was to hear it, and to judge of it, and if they are pleased, to approve of it, and then, with them, the great purpose for which said sermon was delivered is forthwith accomplished. There is no more of it. It is like a business settled and set by. The minister preached, and the people were pleased, and there is an end of the affair. They go back to their homes and their merchandise; and they go just as they came, carrying along with them not one trace of a living impression on their hearts, their principles, or their consciences. What they have heard may be talked of for some days, or remembered for some months; but if in a week or a fortnight after it, the question is put, Can you tell of any actual or discernible fruit from this said sermon? any closer fellowship with the Saviour in consequence of it? any of the effects upon the man which never fail to accompany this fellowship? any dying unto sin? any fervent desires after righteousness? any pressing forward to the accomplishments of the new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord? any greater devotedness to the business of sanctification? any reformation of thieves or drunkards? any visible influence on the peace and order of families? any breaking down of that worldly spirit which is enough of itself to prove the enmity of man to his God, though there were no outward or declared profligacy in any of his actions? any dissolving of this enmity?—in a word, any one evidence that we can point our finger to, that this faith which is so much professed and so much talked of, is working by love?—is making the soul a fit habitation for God by His Spirit?—is bringing down the fulfilment of the promise upon it, even the Holy Ghost given to those who should believe? whereby the old man is destroyed, the body of sin is mortified, all former vanities have passed away; and the whole man, brought under the dominion of a new and a better principle, rises every day in purity and loveliness of character, to a meetness for the society of angels, for the presence of God, for the holy exercises of heaven, for the delights of an unfading immortality.

Apply these questions to a very fond and delighted hearer; and how often may we find, that the thing which gave so much pleasure to the itching ears of the man, has not had the weight of a straw on the man himself! It plays like music upon his ear; but it does not enter with the subduing energy of conviction into his heart. Follow him through all the business of his varied relations at home or in society, and you see him to be substantially the same man as before,—with all his old principles



and practices about him—living his wonted life of indulgence to himself, and at as great a distance as ever from the new habit of living to the Saviour who died for him. His soul persists in all the unmoved obstinacy of its alienation from God. It still bends to the earth, and is earthly. Time and the interests of time retain all their wonted ascendancy over it. The Judge of the secrets of the inner man sees his heart to be as alive as ever to the world, and as dead in affection as ever to the things which are above. Oh, he is still the old man, and still persisting in the deeds of it. The love of the world, which is opposite to the love of the Father,—the selfishness of diseased nature, which is opposite to the charity of the gospel, are still the supreme and the urging principles of his constitution; and they tell us that the voice of the preacher has had no more effect upon him, than the lullaby of a nurse's song.

We are forcibly carried to this train of reflection by the passage which lies before us. The common people heard our Saviour gladly; and what, we ask, became of these common people? To-day the mob of Jerusalem lift the hosannahs of a far-sounding popularity—a few days more, and they call out to crucify Him. His admirers became His murderers: and they who at one time heard Him gladly, at another are gladly consenting unto His death. In a few years Jerusalem was given up to the avenging hand of the adversary; and these wicked men, who at one time hung with delight upon the preaching of the Saviour, were miserably destroyed. The plea that they had eaten and drunken in His presence, and that He had taught in their streets, was of no avail to them. It did not save them from the awful doom of the workers of iniquity; and they who at one time were the admirers and the delighted hearers of our Saviour's doctrine, were at another the victims of His wrath.

What was the principle of this wondrous revolution in their sentiments respecting Christ? We shall confine ourselves to one summary expression of it. The whole explanation of the matter lies here. They were willing enough for the time being to follow the Saviour; but they would not follow Him upon His terms, and when these terms came to be understood, they drew back from following Him. He had before said, that "he who followeth after me must forsake all;" and these Jewish hearers, when put to the trial, would not forsake their national vanity, would not forsake their worldly prospects of interest and aggrandisement, would not forsake their fond anticipations of a temporal prince

to protect and to deliver them. While these agreeable prospects were full in their eye, they followed Him; but when these prospects vanished, and it came to denying themselves, and taking up their cross, they ceased from following Him. They listened to Him with delight when He told them how Christ was greater than David; but why?—because they looked forward to the earthly felicities of a still more prosperous reign, and a still prouder era in their history. It was all, it would appear, a matter of selfishness. They aspired after a share in the glories of their anticipated monarchy, and rejoiced in the near view of those privileges which they conceived to lie before them: but when, instead of privileges, it came to persecution,—when, instead of honour, it came to humiliation,—when, instead of soft and silken security, it came to sacrifices, to sufferings, and self-denial,—they shrunk from it altogether; and, by falling away from the contest on earth, they forfeited the crown in heaven.

And there are other examples of the same thing in the Bible. It is said of Herod that he heard John the Baptist gladly, and that he observed him in many things. But he did not observe nor follow him in all things. He did not come up to the principle of forsaking all. He would not forsake his unhallowed connexion with his brother's wife; and when put to this proof of his self-denial, he imprisoned the prophet, and beheaded him.

The rich man who came with the question to our Saviour about the way to eternal life heard Him with pleasure, so long as He did not touch upon his favourite affection. There was no self-denial in keeping himself from those sins to which he felt no temptation; and he listened with patient satisfaction to the recital of those commandments, all of which he had been led by his circumstances or his natural disposition to keep from his youth up. But when the principle of "he that followeth after me must forsake all," was applied to his besetting sin, he could not stand it. He could not find it in his heart to slay or to renounce this idol. He could not give up the service of the one master, or make an entire and unexcepted dedication of himself to the service of the other; and the same man who heard Him gladly at one part of His instructions, went away from the other question exceeding sorrowful, and withdrew his footsteps from that following of the Lord fully, by which alone we can obtain an entrance into the kingdom of God.

In the parable of the sower, there are men spoken of who heard the word with joy; but, as a proof that the joyful hearing

of the word is one thing and the effectual receiving of it is another, these men fell away. Persecution came, and by and bye they were offended. They at first resolved to follow the Saviour; but the term of forsaking all was what they had not strength of purpose nor depth of principle for acting up to. They gave way in the hour of temptation; and, rather than forsake their ease, or their life, or their fortune, they gave up all part and lot in the inheritance.

But, can there be a more striking example of this than at the preaching of the apostles after the resurrection? All Jerusalem was filled with their doctrine, and that doctrine was listened to with indulgence and pleasure. It is true that the interested men took the alarm at it; but set aside these, and we are told that they were in favour with all the people. If an apostle preached, he was at no loss for a multitude, and an approving multitude too, to gather around him, and hang upon him with admiration and delight. Had there been as many Christians as delighted hearers among them, Jerusalem would have been the most Christian city that ever flourished on the face of the earth. It looked so fair and so promising, when every street poured forth its multitudes, and they all ran together to the apostles, glorifying God for all which they heard and saw. Some were added to the church of such as should be saved. But they were a mere handful to the population of the devoted city. They were a mere gleaning among that number who kept in awe the high-priest and the council of Jerusalem, and restrained their violence against the first ministers of the New Testament. Yes, they were favourite ministers at that time, men of vast acceptance and popularity; and, if to hear the word gladly with the ear were the same thing as to receive the influence of that word into the heart, the vengeance of a rejected Saviour might have been averted from Jerusalem. But, alas! the hearers of that time must have been like many of the hearers of the present day. They heard, and they were pleased; but they would not forsake all to follow. They were afraid of excommunication, and they clung by their synagogues. They would not forsake the approbation of their priests, and the protection of their rulers. They clung by the superstitions, by the iniquities, by the bigotries of Jerusalem; and with Jerusalem they perished.

What does all this teach us? Let us come to the application. The gospel under which we sit has two great articles. By the one, we are invited to faith; by the other, we are called to re-

pentance. By the one, we are offered the remission of our sins; by the other, we are called upon for the renunciation of our sins. By the one, we are told of a salvation, of which if we accept, we shall be reconciled and taken into full acceptance with God. By the other, we are told of a salvation, of which if we accept, we shall be regenerated by the operation of the Spirit of God. By the one, we are graciously assured that, if we turn to Christ as into a stronghold, we shall be safe; and the storm of the Divine wrath will utterly pass us by. By the other, we are solemnly warned that, in turning to Christ, we must turn from our iniquities—else if the Judge find us in these on the great day of reckoning, the fury both of a violated law and an insulted gospel will be let loose upon us, and we borne off as by a whirlwind to the horrors of an undone eternity. Now, the whole secret of such an exhibition as was made by the common people at Jerusalem, and as may still be realized by the people of the present day, is that they like the one article, they dislike the other—glad enough to take all that God offers, but not so glad to perform all that God requires—giving their delighted consent to the one, refusing it to the other—and thus running with delight after those men of popularity and acceptance who tell them of the faith of the New Testament, but falling away with disaffection and distaste when told of the repentance of the New Testament. They are joyful hearers of the word; but our question is, are they the obedient doers of it? Oh, it is pleasant to be told of heaven; and, amidst the agitations of this earthly wilderness, to have the eye carried forward to that place of quietness. But are you willing to take, or rather are you actually taking the prescribed road to heaven—though that road should lead you through manifold trials and manifold tribulations?—It is soothing to listen to the preacher's voice, when he tells you to rest in the sufficiency of the Saviour. Are you building anything upon this foundation? If you rest on the sufficiency of Christ, you will receive of that sufficiency. He will make His grace sufficient for you; and, perfecting His strength in your weakness, He will make you run with delight in the way of new obedience.—It is delightful to be told of the privileges of the Christian faith. Are you proving yourselves to be in the faith? It is not a name, but a principle. It is not a thing to be merely talked of. It is like the kingdom of heaven to which it carries you—not in word, but in power; and then only does it work with power, when it works by love and keeps the com-

mandments.—It is indeed a welcome sound upon a sinner's ear that he is justified by the righteousness of Christ. Oh, it is a faithful saying; and the only plea upon which we have access with confidence to God. But he who is justified is also sanctified, is another faithful saying; and let us come to close questioning with you—are you, or are you not, in the strength of God's promised Spirit, making the business of your sanctification a daily and hourly and ever-doing business?—You like to follow the minister who preaches Christ; and, in going after him, you have forsaken all the legalists, all the mere men of morality, all the self-sufficient expounders of that righteousness which is by the law. But what we ask is—do you follow Christ, and that with an entire devotedness to Him and to Him only? And, in following after Him, do you forsake all? In turning to Him, do you turn from your iniquities? In yielding yourselves up unto His service, do you renounce the service of sin and of the world?—for, if not, you are like the common people of Jerusalem, and you will share in the judgment that came over them. You may hear gladly; but what does it avail, if you do not follow faithfully? Jerusalem which they lived in was destroyed; and they were destroyed along with it. The world which you live in will be destroyed also; and, when the Judge cometh, the plea which many of the lovers of orthodoxy may lift up, will not serve them—“Lord, we have eaten and drunken of thy sacraments, and pleasant to our souls was the voice of thy messengers.” But “then will I answer to them, I never knew you; depart from me, all ye that work iniquity.”

But in sounding the alarm, it should be our care that it reach far enough; and we apprehend of this denunciation that we have now uttered against the children of iniquity—that many are the consciences, even of those now present, who may not be rightly or fully affected by it. When we speak of those who work iniquity, to the fair and passable men of society, they never once think of including themselves in this description; but their thoughts go abroad to thieves and drunkards and defrauders; and applying to them the declaration of Scripture, that “they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,” they lull their own spirits into a deep slumber. But we fall short of our aim, if we do not awaken them too out of this fatal security; if we do not break up this prevalent delusion; if we do not reach conviction into other hearts than those of gross and notorious offenders. We look not for theft or drunkenness among

men of honour and decency and respect in their neighbourhood—yet would we open their eyes too to their state of spiritual nakedness, and tell them how it is that even they are workers of iniquity. To them belongs that most damning of all iniquity, the iniquity of a heart alienated from God. It is the heart wherewith He has principally to do; and “give me thy heart” is the first and greatest of His commandments. The evil things which come out of it may be more or less visible to the eye of the world; but He does not need to look to the stream, for His penetrating eye reaches to the fountain-head. The world may not see you to be a thief or a drunkard; but He sees you, and takes note of you as an enemy of His. He sees in that heart of yours, the hourly and the habitual guilt of spiritual idolatry. He sees the whole current of its affections and wishes to be away from Himself, and fully directed to the vanities and interests of the world. He sees the praise of men more sought after than is His praise; and, with the outside of plausibility which you maintain before the eye of your fellows, He, the discerner of your thoughts and intents, may see how other things are more loved and followed than God. It is the heart that He looks to; and well does He see its bent and its tendency, through all the ambiguities by which you deceive and satisfy your own unfaithful consciences. He takes knowledge of it when you are too busy with your own way and your own counsel to take knowledge of it yourselves. He follows it through the secrecy of all its hidden movements; nor does it escape His notice when it disowns Him, and goes in quest of other gods—when it casts Him off and worships idols—when it renounces the true God, and makes a God of wealth, a God of vanity, a God of pleasure, and as many more Gods as there are allurements from Himself in this deceitful world. Not a worker of iniquity, because you do not steal! Why, you rob God of the property which belongs to Him, of His own rightful property in the hearts and affections of His own children. Not a worker of iniquity, because, in the form or the outward matter of it, you break not the sixth or the eighth commandment! Why, you live in habitual violation of the first and greatest commandment, which is, “Love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and strength, and mind.” Not a worker of iniquity, because you do nothing which the world can point its finger to! Because you escape the finger of the world, does it follow that you can escape the eye of God? He sees you to be a rebel against Himself;

and, with that heart of yours turned to its own vanities, with neither the enjoyment of God for its object, nor the love of God for its principle; be assured that it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and is fully set in you to do that which is evil.

The maxim, then, of forsaking all to follow after Christ, reaches a great deal farther than to the notoriously profligate. It must go round among all the sons and daughters of Adam. It is not confined to the visible doings of the hand, but carries its authority over the whole man, and claims more especially an absolute dominion among the affections and wishes and tastes of the inner man. He who hears gladly to-day, and lies or steals or defrauds to-morrow, is not the only man that we are aiming at. He who hears gladly to-day, and to-morrow gives his soul to any of the perishable idols of time, instead of devoting it with all its longings and energies to God, is fully included in the lesson which we are now giving to you. Delighted with the sermon, we grant you, but not one inch of progress made toward the clean heart and the right spirit. Lulled, Sabbath after Sabbath, as if by the sound of a pleasant song, or of one who can play well upon an instrument—and yet the old man persisting in all the unsubdued obstinacy of his deep and inborn principles. Rejoicing once a week in the house of God, as if it were the gate of heaven—yet the whole week long giving his entire heart to the world, and resting all his security upon the world's wealth, and the world's enjoyments. Running after gospel ministers, and sitting in all the complacency of approbation under them—and yet an utter stranger to the devotedness, to the spirituality, to the close walk, and the godly spirit of the altogether Christian. O my brethren, it bids so flattering to hear the city bells, and to see every house pouring forth its family of worshippers—to look upon the avenue which leads to the house of prayer, and see it all in a glow with the crowd and bustle of passengers—to enter the church, and see every eye fastened attentively on the man of God, as he tells of the high matters of salvation, and presses home the preparations of eternity upon an arrested audience. Oh, if the charmed ear were a true and unfailing index to the subdued heart, the business of the minister would go on so prosperously! But there is a power of resistance within that is above his exertions and beyond them—there is a spirit working in the children of disobedience which no power of human eloquence can lay—there is an obstinate alienation from God, which God

alone can subdue; and, unless He make a willing people in the day of His power, the influence of the preacher's lesson will die away with the music of his voice—the old man will be carried out as vigorous and entire as he was carried in—the word spoken may play upon the fancy, but it will not reach the deeply-seated corruption which lies in the affections and the will—the seriousness which sits so visible on every countenance, will vanish into nothing in half an hour—the men of the world, and the things of the world, will engross and occupy the room that is now taken up with something like Christianity—and all will be dissipated into a thing of nought, when you go to your shops and your farms and your families and your market-places.

But we must now draw to a close, and will lay before you a few things in the way of practical application.

I.—First, then, we have no quarrel with you because you are of the number of those who hear gladly. This is so far well. It is one of the deadliest symptoms of those who perish, that to them the preaching of the cross is foolishness. If such be your indifference or aversion to the word of God, if such be your contempt for the opportunities of hearing it, that, now when they are brought week after week within your reach, you will nevertheless turn in distaste and dissatisfaction away—if you prefer a Sabbath on the way-side, or a Sabbath in the fields, or a Sabbath in sordid indolence and dissipation at home, to a Sabbath in the solemn assembly of worshippers—Then will it sorely aggravate your condemnation in the great day of account, that you refused to listen to the word when the word was brought nigh unto you—that, rather than hear the word by which you and your families might have been saved, you chose to perish for lack of knowledge, even that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ which is life everlasting—that, when the ministers of the Most High lifted their beseeching voice, you regarded them not—that you preferred taking your own pleasure now, reckless of the awful day of account and of punishment that is to come afterwards, even that day when the Judge from heaven shall appear “in flaming fire, to take vengeance on those who know not God and who obey not the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, when they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.” Better than this surely is it that you should hear the word gladly, and that you should rejoice when friends and companions say, “Let us go up to the house of God.” We have no quarrel, then, we repeat,



with your being of the number of those who are the glad hearers of the word. Are there any here present who recollect the day when the language of the gospel was offensive to them, but who now listen to it with eagerness and delight? A very promising symptom most assuredly; and it may evidence the beginning of a good work which God may carry forward and bring to perfection.

II.—But, secondly, though your hearing gladly be a promising symptom, it is not an infallible one. The common people of Jerusalem heard gladly; and we need not repeat the awful disaster and ruin which, in the course of a few years, overtook the families of that common people—so that their old, and their middle-aged, and their little ones, were miserably destroyed. Herod heard gladly. The men who fell away in the parable of the sower heard gladly, and you may hear gladly yet fall short of the kingdom of God. “Be not high-minded, but fear.” “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” The apostle tells how far a man might proceed in the characteristics and evidences of a seeming Christianity, and yet fall irrecoverably away. One of these characteristics is a taste for the good word of God; but this, so far from being of any avail to the presumptuous backslider, serves the more to fix and to aggravate his doom—the doom of a perdition from which there is no possibility of a recall, it being impossible, he tells us, “to renew them again unto repentance.” Keep fast then what you have gotten, and strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die.

III.—But though to hear gladly be not an infallible symptom, yet to hear the whole truth gladly is a much more promising symptom than only to hear part of the truth gladly. We fear that it is this partial liking for the word which forms the whole amount of their affection for it, with the great majority of professing Christians. They like one part; but they do not like another. Some like to hear of the privileges of the gospel; but they do not like to hear of the precepts of the gospel, and that the soul in whom Christ is formed the hope of glory, will purify itself even as Christ is pure. This partial liking, so far from a promising symptom, we count to be a very dangerous one. It is dividing Christ. It is putting asunder the things which God hath joined. It is giving the lie to His testimony; and making our own taste and our own inclination take the precedency of God's word and of God's way. Make it a high point of duty to listen with equal reverence and satisfaction to all God's commu-

nications. Do you listen with delight to the minister, when he tells you to follow after Christ? Listen with equal delight to the minister, when he tells you that in following after Christ you must forsake all. If this truth offend you merely when it is spoken, how much more will it offend you when you have a call for its being acted on?—and thus will you fall precisely under that description of hearers who hear with joy, but, when temptation comes, by and bye they are offended. Do you listen with delight to a sermon upon the privileges of faith, and how that all who have it shall inherit the kingdom? Listen with equal delight to a sermon on the properties and influences of faith; and when it tells you how it is a faith which worketh, working by love, purifying the heart, overcoming the world. Do you listen with delight to a sermon on the freeness of grace; and when it tells you how it is offered to all, and that all who will may take of it without money and without price? Listen with equal delight to a sermon on the power and efficacy of grace—telling how it frees all who are under it from the dominion of sin, how it worketh mightily in the souls of believers, how it raises them to newness of life, and strengthens them for all the duties and performances of the new creature—not only teaching all men, but enabling all men who lay hold of it, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present evil world. It looks as if it were to guard us against this partial liking for the word of God, that these two great articles of Christianity, what man receives from God and what God requires of man, under the dispensation of the gospel,—that both of these are often placed together, side by side, within the enclosure of one and the same verse; so as both to be taken up at one glance of the eye by him who reads the verse, or expressed at one breath by him who utters it. The call of the Saviour at the commencement of Mark is, “Repent and believe the gospel.” The apostolic description of the great subjects of preaching is “repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” The office of the ascended Saviour is to “give repentance and the remission of sins.” The privileges of the believer are, that to him “there is no condemnation;” and “he walketh not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” As many as receive Christ, we are told, receive along with him “power to walk as God’s children.” They who are in Christ, we are again told, are “new creatures.” And lastly, do we read of God being faithful and just—not only “to forgive our sins but to cleanse us from all our

unrighteousness." Such passages are innumerable. Let us have our eye alike open upon them all. Let us proceed upon them all—combining delight in the securities of the Christian faith, with diligence in the Christian practice.

IV.—But lastly, if it do not follow that because a man is a delighted hearer of the word, he is therefore an obedient doer of it, how is he to become one? What is there which can bring relief to this melancholy helplessness? How wretched to think that the impression, so quick and lively in the house of God, should be so easily put to flight out of it; and should fall away into forgetfulness, when brought into actual collision with the influences of the world. The man's warmth and his elevation, and his swelling purposes of better things, look so promising; but bring him to the trial, and it all turns out like the vapouring of a coward. The one shows himself in the day of battle—the other in the day of temptation. He goes to his family after a sermon that he has heard, and becomes peevish, though one fruit of the Spirit be gentleness—he goes to an entertainment and becomes luxurious, though one fruit of the Spirit be temperance—he goes to a company and becomes censorious, though one fruit of the Spirit be the love that worketh no ill. In a word, he goes to any one scene of the world; and he loses all sense and feeling of the ever-present God—though the solemn requirement under which he lives is to do all things to His glory. Are we not speaking to your own experience; and may not the personal remembrance of every one of you spare us the task of any further argument, when we assert that the glow of a warm and affecting impression is one thing, and the sturdiness of an enduring principle is another?

We again then recur to the question, how shall we give the property of endurance to that which in time past has been so perishable and so momentary? The strength of your own natural purposes, it would appear, cannot do it. The power of argument cannot do it. The tongue of the minister, though he spake with the eloquence of an angel, cannot do it; and unless some power above and beyond all these be made to rest on you, he may speak to the delight of a crowded assembly, and it will be of no more avail than if he lifted up his voice in the wilderness. But you have met together in the name of one who has promised to be in the midst of you; and He can do it. He alone can deposit in your hearts that seed which remaineth; and come down upon you with an unction from the Holy One never

to be obliterated. What He puts in you will abide in you ; and it will enable you to stand amid the conflicts of the world, and the rudest shock of its temptations. If the Spirit of Christ be in you, then greater will be He that is in you than he that is in the world ; and let your experience of the past, and the feeling of your former helplessness, shut you up unto the faith of Him. If you commit yourself in faith to Him, He will not fail you. His promises are yea and amen ; and if they are not realized upon you, it is because you do not believe in them, because you do not depend on them, because you do not wait and pray for the performance of them. Mark here, my brethren, the efficacy and the indispensableness of prayer. It is the link which cements and binds together the sermon of the minister, with its living and practical effect on the consciences and conduct of the people. Of such essential importance is it, that the apostles made as great account of prayer as they did of the ministry of the word ; and so they gave themselves wholly to both. But for prayer, all our anticipations of a great Christian blessing in the midst of this people and from the services of this church will come to mockery. It is right that these means should be provided ; but the whole enterprise will be a miserable abortion, if we devolve not the work upon God—so as both to seek from Him the blessing, and give to Him all the glory of it. More especially, if at all in earnest about your personal Christianity, I would have you to understand—that, without prayer, prompted by a sense of your own helplessness, and a confidence in the sufficiency of Christ Jesus as your strength and your sanctifier, it will be impossible to realize it. The way is to make an hourly and habitual commitment of yourself to Him ; and He will keep in hourly and habitual safety that which is so committed. He hath obtained for you a great blessing, and to which all of you are most welcome, in having purchased forgiveness for you ; but, in the fulness of His treasury, there is still another blessing in store for all who believe on Him. He came to bless every one of you by turning you from your iniquities. Keep closely and constantly by Him in faith ; and He will keep closely and constantly by you with the power of His grace—giving not only mercy to pardon, but grace to help in every time of need. He will carry you in safety through the concerns and companies of the world. He overcame the world Himself ; and He will enable you to forsake all, and to overcome it also. Abide in Him, and the promise is that He will abide in you. Separate from Him, you become a

withered branch, without fruit and without loveliness. But, abiding in Him, you are formed into His image—you rise in the likeness of His pure and perfect example—you will at all times hear gladly, but not after the example of the common people of Judea. Yours will be a sincere thirst after the milk of His word, not that you may be pleased with the taste of it, but that you may grow thereby—and thus will you give evidence both to God and man of your interest in the Saviour, by being not merely the hearers of the word but the doers also.

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We now proceed to the collection for the funds of this our new undertaking; and, in order to engage your affections the more to our cause, we should like that you fully and precisely understood the object of it. The place of worship in which we are now assembled for the first time is not adequately described to you by its being merely told, that, like other and ordinary chapels heretofore, it forms an addition to the means of Christian instruction in or about Edinburgh. It has a far more special destination than this; and such as we should like to see extended over town and country, till there was not only Sabbath-room enough, but week-day service enough for one and all of the families of our land. It is a church then erected mainly and primarily for the accommodation of the people who reside within the limits of the district in which it is placed. They have the choice of its seats in the first instance; and our only regret is, that till Government do its duty, we shall not be able to afford them at rents so low, as to admit of their being taken in greater numbers, and, if possible, in household pews, not only for the men and women, but even for the children of the working-classes—that the people might come, not merely by individuals, but in whole families to the house of God; and the spectacle be again realized in towns which might still be witnessed in country parishes, where high and low meet together, and the congregation, though sprinkled over with a few of rank and of opulence, is chiefly made up of our men of handicraft and of hard labour. There is none, we think, of correct moral taste, and whose heart is in its right place, that will not rejoice in such a spectacle as far more pleasing in itself, and, if only universal in our churches, far more indicative of a healthful state of the community, than the wretched system of the present day, when the gospel is literally sold to the highest bidders among the rich, and not preached to the poor. And the melancholy conse-

quence is, the irreligion, the ignorance, the reckless habits, and prostrate morality of a neglected population—of a population at the same time sunk both in comfort and character, only because they are neglected; and who would nobly repay, as our experience in this place abundantly testifies, any justice that was done or any attentions that were rendered to them. The process of our operations is an exceedingly simple one. Instead of leaving this church to fill as it may from all parts of the town, we first hold out the seats that we have to dispose of, at such prices as we can afford, to its own parish families—which families, at the same time, have previously opened their doors, and given their welcome to those ministerial yet household services, those visits of Christian charity to the sick and the dying, those labours for the best because the spiritual interests of themselves and their little ones, wherewith they are incessantly plied through the week; and in consequence of which it is our fond expectation and desire, that the attention of the house-going minister will be followed up by the attendance of a church-going people. We do hope that this plain statement will recommend itself to your liberality; and that we shall be helped by you to clear away the debt, and to overcome the difficulties which still attach to our undertaking. The original subscribers look for no return, no remuneration to themselves. Theirs has been an unreserved gift; and not one farthing of repayment, whether in principal or interest, has ever been looked for by any of them. By the generosity of their individual offerings, the main expense of the erection has been defrayed; and, for the liquidation of the remaining expense, we now cast ourselves on the collective offerings of those who desire to see a good cause placed on the footing of a permanent and secure establishment, and freed from all the embarrassments of a still unfinished and unpaid-for operation. Our fond wish for Edinburgh and for its environs is—that, district after district, new churches may arise and old ones be thrown open to their own parish families, till not one house remains which has not within its walls some stated worshipper in one or other of our Christian assemblies; and not one individual can be pointed to, however humble and unknown, who has not some man of God for his personal acquaintance, some Christian minister for his counsellor and friend.

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The afternoon service is postponed till evening; and the reason of this postponement may be well called a very singular

one, on which certainly we were not at all counting, when we had resolved to open our church this day—an annular eclipse of the sun, and where the greatest amount of darkness would happen in the very middle of the exercise, or precisely at three o'clock; and so we fear as both to incommode the minister, and to disturb the congregation. We are unwilling to let this extraordinary event pass without some religious improvement; and what work or manifestation of nature's God, who at the same time is the God of Christianity—sitting on a throne of grace as well as on the throne of creation and providence—the God who, in the language of the apostle's prayer in the Book of Acts, "made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is therein,"—what exhibition of this wonder-working God is not capable of being turned to the account of practical godliness? We should like you then to recognise it as one and the same lesson—that He who has established so much certainty in nature, most true to Himself, hath established the like certainty in Revelation; that the one economy will be characterized by the same unchangeableness as the other—insomuch that, if we meet with so much constancy, so much to be relied upon in the works of God, there is at least as great a constancy and as much to be firmly and fully relied upon in the word of God. The covenant of the rainbow which marks the dispersion of the clouds and clearing up of the weather, is not more sure than that covenant of grace which forms the great charter of a Christian's hope, and of which we are told in the Bible that it is ordered in all things and sure. The eclipse of this day is one of the most rare and marvellous description, not what is termed a partial and not a total but an annular eclipse, in which the moon passes not over the edge but centrally or almost centrally over the sun's disk—and so that, instead of covering that disk altogether and making the eclipse a total one, it leaves, and for four minutes only, a little ring of the solar orb peering out on all sides of the moon's darkened hemisphere—causing a fine and beautiful circle of light, all that is left for the brief space of four minutes to lighten up our world. The marvellous thing is, that all this should be known to men beforehand; that astronomers can tell the whole that is to happen with such unfailing accuracy; that within a second of time they can announce when it is that the darkness will make its first entrance on the south-west edge of the sun, and when it is to a precise second that the last remainder of darkness will pass away from the north-east edge of

it—and when and how long it is that the golden circuit will continue, of one delicate and unbroken line re-entering upon itself, and so completing for a few evanescent minutes an entire orb of luminousness in the heavens. It may well be marvelled at—the certainty of the science of man, or of him who is but the observer of the phenomenon. But remember well, that in order to this, there must be a previous certainty—the unchangeable certainty of Him who is the Creator of the phenomenon; and the unchangeableness of whose ordinances in the heavens, is the sure token and demonstration of the like unchangeableness of His purposes in the word. The calendar of prophecy is in every way as sure as the almanac whether of history or of nature; and, in the unerring fulfilments of both, we may read alike the immutability and the faithfulness of God; of Him who hath said it, and shall He not do it?—and with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.

Think not, my brethren, that we entertain you with any fancy of our own. In Psalm cxix. 89, we are told of God's constancy in the heavens being the sure guarantee of a like constancy in the word. Nay, my brethren, the one has a more inviolable constancy than the other—for heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of God endureth for ever, and shall not pass away. What an emphasis then does it give to the lesson we have been labouring to urge, of attention, solemn and steadfast attention, to that word—what firm, what unfaltering dependence should it establish in the mind of the believer, when he rests on the word of promise as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast—and with what a fearful looking for and certainty of the coming judgment should it fill the heart of the impenitent, when he thinks of the threatenings of God being as sure as His promises; of the laws of the divine government being in every way as certain of fulfilment as the laws of nature, which is the divine workmanship; and more especially, when he thinks of the law of revelation and the law of conscience with all the power and terror of their denunciations against the children of iniquity—when he thinks of these in connexion with the saying of the Saviour, that “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or one tittle of the law shall fail.” When you look then to the spectacle of this day, lift up your heads ye faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and rejoice—for as sure or surer than the prediction of which you are now to witness the accomplishment, is the glorious prediction of Holy Writ that the day of



your restoration draweth nigh : and oh, take warning, ye careless and stout-hearted who are far from righteousness—for as sure or surer than that on this day the sun in the firmament will be shrouded in blackness, is the announcement of the apostle Peter who tells us of another day “when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?” May you all be enabled to say with well-grounded confidence, in the language of the next verse, “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”



THE TWO KINGDOMS,

THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE.

BEING DISCOURSES OF A CHARACTER KINDRED WITH THE ASTRONOMICAL.



## DISCOURSE I.

THE CONSTANCY OF GOD IN HIS WORKS AN ARGUMENT FOR THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD IN HIS WORD.

“For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants.”—PSALM cxix. 89-91.

IN these verses there is affirmed to be an analogy between the word of God and the works of God. It is said of His word, that it is settled in heaven, and that it sustains its faithfulness from one generation to another. It is said of His works, and more especially of those that are immediately around us, even of the earth which we inhabit, that as it was established at the first so it abideth afterwards. And then, as if to perfect the assimilation between them, it is said of both in the 91st verse, “They continue this day according to thine ordinances, for all are thy servants;” thereby identifying the sureness of that word which proceeded from His lips, with the unfailing constancy of that Nature which was formed and is upholden by His hands.

The constancy of Nature is taught by universal experience, and even strikes the popular eye as the most characteristic of those features which have been impressed upon her. It may need the aid of philosophy to learn how unvarying Nature is in all her processes—how even her seeming anomalies can be traced to a law that is inflexible—how what might appear at first to be the caprices of her waywardness, are, in fact, the evolutions of a mechanism that never changes—and that the more thoroughly she is sifted and put to the test by the interrogations of the curious, the more certainly will they find that she walks by a rule which knows no abatement, and perseveres with obedient footstep in that even course, from which the eye of strictest scrutiny has never yet detected one hair-breadth of deviation. It is no longer doubted by men of science, that every remaining semblance of irregularity in the universe is due, not to the fickleness of Nature, but to the ignorance of man—

that her most hidden movements are conducted with a uniformity as rigorous as Fate—that even the fitful agitations of the weather have their law and their principle—that the intensity of every breeze, and the number of drops in every shower, and the formation of every cloud, and all the occurring alternations of storm and sunshine, and the endless shiftings of temperature, and those tremulous varieties of the air which our instruments have enabled us to discover but have not enabled us to explain—that still, they follow each other by a method of succession, which, though greatly more intricate, is yet as absolute in itself as the order of the seasons, or the mathematical courses of astronomy. This is the impression of every philosophical mind with regard to Nature, and it is strengthened by each new accession that is made to science. The more we are acquainted with her, the more are we led to recognise her constancy; and to view her as a mighty though complicated machine, all whose results are sure, and all whose workings are invariable.

But there is enough of patent and palpable regularity in Nature, to give also to the popular mind the same impression of her constancy. There is a gross and general experience that teaches the same lesson, and that has lodged in every bosom a kind of secure and steadfast confidence in the uniformity of her processes. The very child knows and proceeds upon it. He is aware of an abiding character and property in the elements around him—and has already learned as much of the fire, and the water, and the food that he eats, and the firm ground that he treads upon, and even of the gravitation by which he must regulate his postures and his movements, as to prove, that, infant though he be, he is fully initiated in the doctrine, that Nature has her laws and her ordinances, and that she continueth therein. And the proofs of this are ever multiplying along the journey of human observation: insomuch, that when we come to manhood, we read of Nature's constancy throughout every department of the visible world. It meets us wherever we turn our eyes. Both the day and the night bear witness to it. The silent revolutions of the firmament give it their pure testimony. Even those appearances in the heavens, at which superstition stood aghast, and imagined that Nature was on the eve of giving way, are the proudest trophies of that stability which reigns throughout her processes—of that unswerving consistency where-with she prosecutes all her movements. And the lesson that is thus held forth to us from the heavens above, is responded to by

the earth below; just as the tides of ocean wait the footsteps of the moon, and, by an attendance kept up without change or intermission for thousands of years, would seem to connect the regularity of earth with the regularity of heaven. But, apart from these greater and simpler energies, we see a course and a uniformity everywhere. We recognise it in the mysteries of vegetation. We follow it through the successive stages of growth, and maturity, and decay, both in plants and animals. We discern it still more palpably in that beautiful circulation of the element of water, as it rolls its way by many thousand channels to the ocean—and, from the surface of this expanded reservoir, is again uplifted to the higher regions of the atmosphere—and is there dispersed in light and fleecy magazines over the four quarters of the globe—and at length accomplishes its orbit, by falling in showers on a world that waits to be refreshed by it. And all goes to impress us with the regularity of Nature, which, in fact, teems throughout all its varieties, with power, and principle, and uniform laws of operation—and is viewed by us as a vast laboratory, all the progressions of which have a rigid and unfailing necessity stamped upon them.

Now, this contemplation has at times served to foster the atheism of philosophers. It has led them to deify Nature, and to make her immutability stand in the place of God. They seem impressed with the imagination, that had the Supreme Cause been a Being who thinks, and wills, and acts as man does, on the impulse of a felt and a present motive, there would be more the appearance of spontaneous activity, and less of mute and unconscious mechanism in the administrations of the universe. It is the very unchangeableness of nature, and the steadfastness of those great and mighty processes wherewith no living power that is superior to Nature, and is able to shift or to control her, is seen to interfere—it is this which seems to have impressed the notion of some blind and eternal fatality on certain men of loftiest but deluded genius. And, accordingly, in France, where the physical sciences have, of late, been the most cultivated, have there also been the most daring avowals of atheism. The universe has been affirmed to be an everlasting and indestructible effect; and from the abiding constancy that is seen in Nature, through all her departments, have they inferred, that thus it has always been, and that thus it will ever be.

But this atheistical impression that is derived from the constancy of Nature is not peculiar to the disciples of philosophy.

It is the familiar and the practical impression of every-day life. The world is apprehended to move on steady and unvarying principles of its own; and these secondary causes have usurped, in man's estimation, the throne of the Divinity. Nature, in fact, is personified into God: and as we look to the performance of a machine without thinking of its maker—so the very exactness and certainty wherewith the machinery of creation performs its evolutions, has thrown a disguise over the agency of the Creator. Should God interpose by miracle, or interfere by some striking and special manifestation of providence, then man is awakened to the recognition of Him. But he loses sight of the Being who sits behind these visible elements, while he regards those attributes of constancy and power which appear in the elements themselves. They see no demonstration of a God, and they feel no need of Him, while such unchanging and such unfailing energy continues to operate in the visible world around them; and we need not go to the schools of ratiocination in quest of this infidelity, but may detect it in the bosoms of simple and unlettered men, who, unknown to themselves, make a God of Nature, and just because of Nature's constancy; having no faith in the unseen Spirit who originated all and upholds all, and that because all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

Such has been the perverse effect of Nature's constancy on the alienated mind of man: but let us now attend to the true interpretation of it. God has, in the first instance, put into our minds a disposition to count on the uniformity of nature, inasmuch that we universally look for a recurrence of the same event in the same circumstances. This is not merely the belief of experience, but the belief of instinct. It is antecedent to all the findings of observation, and may be exemplified in the earliest stages of childhood. The infant who makes a noise on the table with his hand for the first time, anticipates a repetition of the noise from a repetition of the stroke, with as much confidence as he who has witnessed, for years together, the unvariableness wherewith these two terms of the succession have followed each other. Or, in other words, God, by putting this faith into every human creature, and making it a necessary part of his mental constitution, has taught him at all times to expect the like result in the like circumstances. He has thus virtually told him what is to happen, and what he has to look for in every given condition—and by its so happening accordingly, He just makes good



the veracity of His own declaration. The man who leads me to expect that which he fails to accomplish, I would hold to be a deceiver. God has so framed the machinery of my perceptions, as that I am led irresistibly to expect, that everywhere events will follow each other in the very train in which I have ever been accustomed to observe them—and when God so sustains the uniformity of nature, that in every instance it is rigidly so, He is just manifesting the faithfulness of His character. Were it otherwise he would be practising a mockery on the expectation which He himself had inspired. God may be said to have promised to every human being, that Nature will be constant—if not by the whisper of an inward voice to every heart, at least by the force of an uncontrollable bias which He has impressed on every constitution. So that when we behold Nature keeping by its constancy, we behold the God of Nature keeping by His faithfulness—and the system of visible things, with its general laws, and its successions which are invariable, instead of an opaque materialism to intercept from the view of mortals the face of the Divinity, becomes the mirror which reflects upon them the truth that is unchangeable, the ordination that never fails.

Conceive that it had been otherwise—first, that man had no faith in the constancy of Nature—then how could all his experience have profited him? How could he have applied the recollections of his past, to the guidance of his future history? And what would have been left to signalize the wisdom of mankind above that of veriest infancy? Or, suppose that he had the implicit faith in Nature's constancy, but that Nature was wanting in the fulfilment of it—that at every moment his intuitive reliance on this constancy was met by some caprice or waywardness of Nature, which thwarted him in all his undertakings—that, instead of holding true to her announcements, she held the children of men in most distressful uncertainty, by the freaks and the falsities in which she ever indulged herself—and that every design of human foresight was thus liable to be broken up, by ever and anon the putting forth of some new fluctuation. Tell us, in this wild misrule of elements changing their properties, and events ever flitting from one method of succession to another, if man could subsist for a single day, when all the accomplishments without were thus at war with all the hopes and calculations within. In such a chaos and conflict as this, would not the foundations of human wisdom be utterly sub-

verted? Would not man, with his powerful and perpetual tendency to proceed on the constancy of Nature, be tempted, at all times, and by the very constitution of his being, to proceed upon a falsehood? It were the way, in fact, to turn the administration of Nature into a system of deceit. The lessons of to-day would be falsified by the events of to-morrow. He were indeed the father of lies who could be the author of such a regimen as this—and well may we rejoice in the strict order of the goodly universe which we inhabit, and regard it as a noble attestation to the wisdom and beneficence of its great Architect.

But it is more especially as an evidence of His truth that the constancy of Nature is adverted to in our text. It is of his faithfulness unto all generations that mention is there made; and for the growth and the discipline of your piety, we know not a better practical habit than that of recognising the unchangeable truth of God, throughout your daily and hourly experience of Nature's unchangeableness. Your faith in it is of His working—and what a condition would you have been reduced to, had the faith which is within, not been met by an entire and unexpected accordancy with the fulfilments that are without! He has not told you what to expect by the utterance of a voice—but He has taught you what to expect by the leadings and the intimations of a strong constitutional tendency—and in virtue of this, there is not a human creature who does not believe, and almost as firmly as in his own existence, that fire will continue to burn, and water to cool, and matter to resist, and unsupported bodies to fall, and ocean to bear the adventurous vessel upon its surface, and the solid earth to uphold the tread of his footsteps; and that spring will appear again in her wonted smiles, and summer will glow into heat and brilliancy, and autumn will put on the same luxuriance as before, and winter, at her stated periods, revisit the world with her darkness and her storms. We cannot sum up these countless varieties of Nature; but the firm expectation is, that throughout them all, as she has been established, so she will abide to the day of her final dissolution. And we call upon you to recognise in Nature's constancy, the answer of Nature's God to this expectation. All these material agents are, in fact, the organs by which He expresses His faithfulness to the world; and that unveering generality which reigns and continues everywhere, is but the perpetual demonstration of a truth that never varies, as well as of laws that never are rescinded. It is for us that He upholds the world in all

its regularity. It is for us that He sustains so unviolably the march and the movement of those innumerable progressions which are going on around us. It is in remembrance of His promises to us, that He meets all our anticipations of Nature's uniformity, with the evolutions of a law that is unalterable. It is because He is a God that cannot lie, that He will make no invasion on that wondrous correspondency which He himself hath instituted between the world that is without, and our little world of hopes, and projects, and anticipations that are within. By the constancy of Nature, He hath imprinted upon it the lesson of His own constancy—and that very characteristic where-with some would fortify the ungodliness of their hearts, is the most impressive exhibition which can be given of God, as always faithful, and always the same.

This, then, is the real character which the constancy of Nature should lead us to assign to Him who is the Author of it. In every human understanding, He hath planted a universal instinct, by which all are led to believe, that Nature will persevere in her wonted courses, and that each succession of cause and effect which has been observed by us in the time that is past, will, while the world exists, be kept up invariably, and recur in the very same order through the time that is to come. This constancy, then, is as good as a promise that He has made unto all men, and all that is around us on earth or in heaven, proves how inflexibly the promise is adhered to. The chemist in his laboratory, as he questions Nature, may be almost said to put her to the torture, when tried in his hottest furnace, or probed by his searching analysis, to her innermost arcana, she by a spark or an explosion, or an effervescence, or an evolving substance, makes her distinct replies to his investigations. And he repeats her answer to all his fellows in philosophy, and they meet in academic state and judgment to reiterate the question, and in every quarter of the globe her answer is the same—so that, let the experiment, though a thousand times repeated, only be alike in all its circumstances, the result which cometh forth is as rigidly alike, without deficiency, and without deviation. We know how possible it is for these worshippers at the footstool of science, to make a divinity of matter; and that every new discovery of her secrets, should only rivet them more devotedly to her throne. But there is a God who liveth and sitteth there, and these unvarying responses of Nature are all prompted by Himself, and are but the utterances of His immutability. They

are the replies of a God who never changes, and who hath adapted the whole materialism of creation to the constitution of every mind that He hath sent forth upon it. And to meet the expectation which He himself hath given of Nature's constancy, is He at each successive instant of time, vigilant and ready in every part of His vast dominions, to hold out to the eye of all observers, the perpetual and unfailing demonstration of it. The certainties of Nature and of Science, are in fact the vocables by which God announces His truth to the world—and when told how impossible it is that Nature can fluctuate, we are only told how impossible it is that the God of Nature can deceive us.

The doctrine that Nature is constant, when thus related, as it ought to be, with the doctrine that God is true, might well strengthen our confidence in Him anew with every new experience of our history. There is not an hour or a moment, in which we may not verify the one—and, therefore, not an hour or a moment in which we may not invigorate the other. Every touch, and every look, and every taste, and every act of converse between our senses and the things that are without, brings home a new demonstration of the steadfastness of Nature, and along with it a new demonstration both of His steadfastness and of His faithfulness, who is the Governor of Nature. And the same lesson may be fetched from times and from places, that are far beyond the limits of our own personal history. It can be drawn from the retrospect of past ages, where from the unvaried currency of those very processes which we now behold, we may learn the stability of all His ways, whose goings forth are of old, and from everlasting. It can be gathered from the most distant extremities of the earth, where Nature reigns with the same unwearied constancy as it does around us—and where savages count as we do on a uniformity, from which she never falters. The lesson is commensurate with the whole system of things—and with an effulgence as broad as the face of creation, and as clear as the light which is poured over it, does it at once tell that Nature is unchangeably constant, and that God is unchangeably true.

And so it is, that in our text there are presented together, as if there was a tie of likeness between them—that the same God who is fixed as to the ordinances of Nature, is faithful as to the declarations of His word; and as all experience proves how firmly He may be trusted for the one, so is there an argument as strong as experience, to prove how firmly He may be trusted for

the other. By His work in us, He hath awakened the expectation of a constancy in Nature, which He never disappoints. By His word to us, should He awaken the expectation of a certainty in His declarations,—this He will never disappoint. It is because Nature is so fixed, that we apprehend the God of Nature to be so faithful. He who never falsifies the hope that hath arisen in every bosom, from the instinct which He himself hath communicated, will never falsify the hope that shall arise in any bosom from the express utterance of His voice. Were He a God in whose hand the processes of Nature were ever shifting, then might we conceive Him a God from whose mouth the proclamations of grace had the like characters of variance and vacillation. But it is just because of our reliance on the one, that we feel so much of repose in our dependence upon the other—and the same God who is so unfailing in the ordinances of His creation, do we hold to be equally unfailing in the ordinances of His word.

And it is strikingly accordant with these views, that Nature never has been known to recede from her constancy, but for the purpose of giving place and demonstration to the authority of the word. Once, in a season of miracle, did the word take the precedency of Nature, but ever since hath Nature resumed her courses, and is now proving, by her steadfastness, the authority of that which she then proved to be authentic by her deviations. When the word was first ushered in, Nature gave way for a period, after which she moves in her wonted order, till the present system of things shall pass away, and that faith which is now upholden by Nature's constancy, shall then receive its accomplishment at Nature's dissolution. And oh, how God magnifieth His word above all His name, when He tells that heaven and earth shall pass away, but that His word shall not pass away—and that while His creation shall become a wreck, not one jot or one tittle of His testimony shall fail. The world passeth away—but the word endureth for ever; and if the faithfulness of God stand forth so legibly on the face of the temporary world, how surely may we reckon on the faithfulness of that word which has a vastly higher place in the counsels and fulfilments of eternity?

The argument may not be comprehended by all; but it will not be lost, should it lead any to feel a more emphatic certainty and meaning than before in the declarations of the Bible—and to conclude, that He, who for ages hath stood so fixed to all His plans and purposes in Nature, will stand equally fixed to all that He proclaims, and to all that He promises in Revelation. To

be in the hands of such a God, might well strike a terror into the hearts of the guilty—and that unrelenting death which, with all the sureness of an immutable law, is seen, before our eyes, to seize upon every individual of every species of our world, full well evinces how He, the uncompromising Lawgiver, will execute every utterance that He has made against the children of iniquity. And on the other hand, how this very contemplation ought to encourage all who are looking to the announcements of the same God in the gospel, and who perceive that there He has embarked the same truth, and the same unchangeableness, on the offers of mercy. All Nature gives testimony to this, that He cannot lie—and seeing that He has stamped such enduring properties on the elements even of our perishable world, never should I falter from that confidence which He hath taught me to feel, when I think of that property wherewith the blood which was shed for me, cleanseth from all sin; and of that property wherewith the body which was broken, beareth the burden of all its penalties. He who hath so nobly met the faith that He has given unto all in the constancy of Nature, by a uniformity which knows no abatement, will meet the faith that He has given unto any in the certainty of grace, by a fulfilment unto every believer, which knows no exception.

And it is well to remark the difference that there is between the explanation given in the text, of Nature's constancy, and the impression which the mere students or disciples of Nature have of it. It is because of her constancy that they have been led to invest her, as it were, in properties of her own; that they have given a kind of independent power and stability to matter; that in the various energies which lie scattered over the field of visible contemplation, they see a native inherent virtue, which never for a single moment is slackened or suspended—and therefore imagine, that as no force from without seems necessary to sustain, so as little, perhaps, is there need for any such force from without to originate. The mechanical certainty of all Nature's processes, as it appears in their eyes to supersede the demand for any upholding agency, so does it also supersede, in the silent imaginations of many, and according to the express and bold avowals of some, the demand for any creative agency. It is thus, that Nature is raised into a divinity, and has been made to reign over all, in the state and jurisdiction of an eternal fatalism; and proud Science, which by wisdom knoweth not God, hath, in her march of discovery, seized upon the invariable certainties of Nature,

those highest characteristics of His authority and wisdom and truth, as the instruments by which to disprove and to dethrone Him.

Now, compare this interpretation of monstrous and melancholy atheism, with that which the Bible gives, why all things move so invariably. It is because that "all are Thy servants." It is because they are all under the bidding of a God who has purposes from which He never falters, and hath issued promises from which He never fails. It is because the arrangements of His vast and capacious household are already ordered for the best, and all the elements of Nature are the ministers by which He fulfils them. That is the master who has most honour and obedience from his domestics, throughout all whose ordinations there runs a consistency from which he never deviates; and he best sustains his dignity in the midst of them, who, by mild but resistless sway, can regulate the successions of every hour, and affix his sure and appropriate service to every member of the family. It is when we see all, in any given time, at their respective places, and each distinct period of the day having its own distinct evolution of business or recreation, that we infer the wisdom of the instituted government, and how irrevocable the sanctions are by which it is upholden. The vexatious alternations of command and of countermand; the endless fancies of humour, and caprice, and waywardness, which ever and anon break forth, to the total overthrow of system; the perpetual innovations which none do foresee, and for which none, therefore, can possibly be prepared—these are not more harassing to the subject, than they are disparaging to the truth and authority of the superior. It is in the bosom of a well-conducted family, where you witness the sure dispensation of all the reward and encouragement which have been promised, and the unflinching execution of the disgrace and the dismissal that are held forth to obstinate disobedience. Now those very qualities of which this uniformity is the test and the characteristic in the government of any human society, of these also is it the test and the characteristic in the government of Nature. It bespeaks the wisdom, and the authority, and the truth of Him who framed and who administers. Let there be a King eternal, immortal, and invisible, and let this universe be His empire—and in all the rounds of its complex but unerring mechanism, do I recognise Him as the only wise God. In the constancy of Nature, do I read the constancy and truth of that great master Spirit, who hath

imprinted His own character on all that hath emanated from His power; and when told that throughout the mighty lapse of centuries, all the courses both of earth and of heaven have been upholden as before, I only recognise the footsteps of Him who is ever the same, and whose faithfulness is unto all generations. That perpetuity, and order, and ancient law of succession, which have subsisted so long, throughout the wide diversity of things, bear witness to the Lord of hosts, as still at the head of His well-marshalled family. The present age is only re-echoing the lesson of all past ages—and that spectacle, which has misled those who by wisdom know not God, into dreary atheism, has enhanced every demonstration both of His veracity and power to all intelligent worshippers. We know that all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. We know that the whole of surrounding materialism stands forth, to this very hour, in all the inflexibility of her wonted characters. We know that heaven, and earth, and sea, still discharge the same functions, and subserve the very same beneficent processes. We know that astronomy plies the same rounds as before, that the cycles of the firmament move in their old and appointed order, and that the year circulates, as it has ever done, in grateful variety, over the face of an expectant world—but only because all are of God, and they continue this day according to His ordinances—for all are His servants.

Now it is just because the successions which take place in the economy of Nature, are so invariable, that we should expect the successions which take place in the economy of God's moral government to be equally invariable. That expectation which He never disappoints when it is the fruit of a universal instinct, He surely will never disappoint when it is the fruit of His own express and immediate revelation. If because God hath so established it, it cometh to pass, then of whatsoever it may be affirmed that God hath so said it, it will come equally to pass. I should certainly look for the same character in the administrations of His special grace, that I at all times witness in the administrations of His ordinary providence. If I see in the system of His world, that the law by which two events follow each other, gives rise to a connexion between them that never is dissolved, then should He say in His word, that there are certain invariable methods of succession, in virtue of which, when the first term of it occurs, the second is sure at all times to follow, I should be very sure in my anticipations, that it will indeed be



most punctually and most rigidly so. It is thus that the constancy of Nature is in fullest harmony with the authority of Revelation—and that, when fresh from the contemplation of the one, I would listen with most implicit faith to all the announcements of the other.

When we behold all to be so sure and settled in the works of God, then may we look for all being equally sure and settled in the word of God. Philosophy hath never yet detected one iota of deviation from the ordinances of Nature—and never, therefore, may we conclude, shall the experience either of past or future ages detect one iota of deviation from the ordinances of Revelation. He who so pointedly adheres to every plan that He hath established in creation, will as pointedly adhere to every proclamation that He hath uttered in Scripture. There is nought of the fast and loose in any of His processes—and whether in the terrible denunciations of Sinai, or those mild proffers of mercy that were sounded forth upon the world through Messiah, who upholdeth all things by the word of His power, shall we alike experience that God is not to be mocked, and that with Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

With this certainty, then, upon our spirits, let us now look not to the successions which He hath instituted in Nature, but to the successions which He hath announced to us in the word of His testimony—and let us, while so doing, fix and solemnize our thoughts by the consideration, that as God hath said it, so will He do it.

The first of these successions, then, on which we may count infallibly, is that which He hath proclaimed between sin and punishment. The soul that sinneth it shall die. And here there is a common ground on which the certainties of divine revelation meet and are at one with the certainties of human experience. We are told in the Bible that all have sinned, and that therefore death hath passed upon all men. The connexion between these two terms is announced in Scripture to be invariable—and all observation tells us that it is even so. Such was the sentence uttered in the hearing of our first parents; and all history can attest how God hath kept by the word of His threatening—and how this law of jurisprudence from heaven is realized before us upon earth, with all the certainty of a law of Nature. The death of man is just as stable and as essential a part of his physiology, as are his birth, or his expansion, or his maturity, or his decay. It looks as much a thing of organic necessity, as a thing

of arbitrary institution—and here do we see blended into one exhibition, a certainty of the Divine word that never fails, and a constancy in Nature that never is departed from. It is indeed a striking accordancy that what in one view of it appears to be a uniform process of Nature, in another view of it, is but the unrelenting execution of a dread utterance from the God of Nature. From this contemplation, may we gather, that God is as certain in all His words, as He is constant in all His ways. Men can philosophize on the diseases of the human system—and the laborious treatise can be written on the class, and the character, and the symptoms of each of them—and in our halls of learning, the ample demonstration can be given, and disciples may be taught how to judge and to prognosticate, and in what appearances to read the fell precursors of mortality—and death has so taken up its settled place among the immutabilities of Nature, that it is as familiarly treated in the lecture-rooms of science, as any other phenomena which Nature has to offer for the exercise of the human understanding. And oh, how often are the smile and the stoutness of infidelity seen to mingle with this appalling contemplation—and how little will its hardy professors bear to be told, that what gives so dread a certainty to their speculation is, that the God of Nature and the God of the Bible are one—that when they describe, in lofty nomenclature, the path of dying humanity, they only describe the way in which He fulfils upon it His irrevocable denunciation—that He is but doing now to the posterity of Adam what He told to Adam himself on his expulsion from paradise—and that if the universality of death prove how every law in the physics of creation is sure, it just as impressively proves, how every word of God's immediate utterance to man, or how every word of prophecy is equally sure.

And in every instance of mortality which you are called to witness, do we call upon you to read in it the intolerance of God for sin, and how unsparingly and unrelentingly it is, that God carries into effect His every utterance against it. The connexion which He hath instituted between the two terms of sin and of death, should lead you from every appeal that is made to your senses by the one, to feel the force of an appeal to your conscience by the other. It proves the hatefulness of sin to God, and it also proves with what unfaltering constancy God will prosecute every threat, until He hath made an utter extirpation of sin from His presence. There is nought which can make more

palpable the way in which God keeps every saying in His perpetual remembrance, and as surely proceeds upon it, than doth this universal plague wherewith He hath smitten every individual of our species, and carries off its successive generations from a world that sprung from His hand in all the bloom and vigour of immortality. When death makes entrance upon a family, and, perhaps, seizes on that one member of it, all whose actual transgressions might be summed up in the outbreakings of an occasional waywardness, wherewith the smiles of infant gaiety were chequered—still how it demonstrates the unbending purposes of God against our present accursed nature, that in some one or other of its varieties, every specimen must die. And so it is, that from one age to another, He makes open manifestation to the world, that every utterance which hath fallen from Him is sure; and that ocular proof is given to the character of Him who is a Spirit, and is invisible; and that sense lends its testimony to the truth of God, and the truth of His Scripture; and that Nature, when rightly viewed, instead of placing its inquirers at atheistical variance with the Being who upholds it, holds out to us the most impressive commentary that can be given, on the reverence which is due to all His communications, even by demonstrating, that faith in His word is at unison with the findings of our daily observation.

But God hath further said of sin and of its consequences, what no observation of ours has yet realized. He hath told us of the judgment that cometh after death, and He hath told us of the two diverse paths which lead from the judgment-seat unto eternity. Of these we have not yet seen the verification, yet surely we have now seen enough to prepare us for the unfailing accomplishment of every utterance that cometh from the lips of God. The unexcepted death which we know cometh upon all men, for that all have sinned, might well convince us of the certainty of that second death which is threatened upon all who turn not from sin unto the Saviour. There is an indissoluble succession here between our sinning and our dying—and we ought now to be so aware of God as a God of precise and peremptory execution, as to look upon the succession being equally indissoluble, between our dying in sin now, and rising to everlasting condemnation hereafter. The sinner who wraps himself in delusive security, and who, because all things continue as they have done, does not reflect of this very characteristic, that it is indeed the most awful proof of God's immutable counsels, and to

himself the most tremendous presage of all the ruin and wretchedness which have been denounced upon him—the spectacle of uniformity that is before his eyes, only goes to ascertain that as God hath purposed, so, without vacillation or inconstancy, will He ever perform. He hath already given a sample, or an earnest of this, in the awful ravages of death; and we ask the sinner to behold, in the ever-recurring spectacle of moving funerals, and desolated families, the token of that still deeper perdition which awaits him. Let him not think that the God who deals His relentless inflictions here on every son and daughter of the species, will falter there from the work of vengeance that shall then descend on the heads of the impenitent. Oh, how deceived then are all those ungodly, who have been building to themselves a safety and an exemption on the perpetuity of Nature! All the perpetuity which they have witnessed is the pledge of a God who is unchangeable—and who, true to His threatening as to every other utterance which passes His lips, hath said, in the hearing of men and of angels, that the soul which is in sin shall perish.

But, secondly, there is another succession announced to us in Scripture, and on the certainty of which we may place as firm a reliance as on any of the observed successions of Nature—even that which obtains between faith and salvation. He who believeth in Christ shall not perish, but shall have life everlasting. The same truth which God hath embarked on the declarations of His wrath against the impenitent, He hath also embarked on the declarations of His mercy to the believer. There is a law of continuity, as unailing as any series of events in Nature, that binds with the present state of an obstinate sinner upon earth, all the horrors of his future wretchedness in hell; but there is also another law of continuity just as unailing, that binds the present state of him who putteth faith in Christ here, with the triumphs and the transports of his coming glory hereafter. And thus it is, that what we read of God's constancy in the book of Nature, may well strengthen our every assurance in the promises of the Gospel. It is not in the recurrence of winter alone, and its desolations, that God manifests His adherence to established processes. There are many periodic evolutions of the bright and the beautiful along the march of His administrations—as the dawn of morn; and the grateful access of spring, with its many hues, and odours, and melodies; and the ripened abundance of harvest; and that glorious arch of heaven, which Science hath now appropriated as her own, but

which nevertheless is placed there by God as the unfailing token of a sunshine already begun, and a storm now ended—all these come forth at appointed seasons, in a consecutive order, yet mark the footsteps of a beneficent Deity. And so the economy of grace has its regular successions, which carry, however, a blessing in their train. The faith in Christ, to which we are invited upon earth, has its sure result, and its landing-place in heaven—and just with as unerring certainty as we behold in the courses of the firmament, will it be followed up by a life of virtue, and a death of hope, and a resurrection of joyfulness, and a voice of welcome at the judgment-seat, and a bright ascent into fields of ethereal blessedness, and an entrance upon glory, and a perpetual occupation in the city of the living God.

To all men hath He given a faith in the constancy of Nature, and He never disappoints it. To some men hath He given a faith in the promises of the Gospel, and He is ready to bestow it upon all who ask, or to perfect that which is lacking in it—and the one faith will as surely meet with its corresponding fulfilment as the other. The invariableness that reigns throughout the kingdom of Nature, guarantees the like invariableness in the kingdom of grace. He who is steadfast to all His appointments will be true to all His declarations—and those very exhibitions of a strict and undeviating order in our universè, which have ministered to the irreligion of a spurious philosophy, form a basis on which the believer can prop a firmer confidence than before, in all the spoken and all the written testimonies of God.

With a man of taste, and imagination, and science, and who is withal a disciple of the Lord Jesus, such an argument as this must shed a new interest and glory over his whole contemplation of visible things. He knows of his Saviour, that by Him all things were made, and that by Him too all things are upholden. The world, in fact, was created by that Being whose name is the Word; and from the features that are imprinted on the one, may he gather some of the leading characteristics of the other. More expressly will he infer from that sure and established order of Nature, in which the whole family of mankind are comprehended, that the more special family of believers are indeed encircled within the bond of a sure and a well-ordered covenant. In those beauteous regularities by which the one economy is marked, will he be led to recognise the “yea” and the “amen” which are stamped on the other economy—and when he learns that the certainties of science are unfailing, does he

also learn that the sayings of Scripture are unalterable. Both he knows to emanate from the same source; and every new experience of Nature's constancy, will just rivet him more tenaciously than before to the doctrine and the declarations of his Bible. Furnished with such a method of interpretation as this, let him go abroad upon Nature, and all that he sees will heighten and establish the hopes which Revelation hath awakened. Every recurrence of the same phenomena as before, will be to him a distinct testimony to the faithfulness of God. The very hours will bear witness to it. The lengthening shades of even will repeat the lesson held out to him by the light of early day—and when night unveils to his eye the many splendours of the firmament, will every traveller on his circuit there, speak to him of that mighty and invisible King, all whose ordinations are sure. And this manifestation from the face of heaven will be reflected to him by the panorama upon earth. Even the buds which come forth at their appointed season on the leafless branches; and the springing up of the flowers and the herbage on the spots of ground from which they had disappeared; and that month of vocal harmony wherewith the mute atmosphere is gladdened as before, with the notes of joyous festival; and so, the regular march of the advancing year through all its footsteps of revival, and progress, and maturity, and decay—these are to him but the diversified tokens of a God whom he can trust, because of a God who changeth not. To his eyes, the world reflects upon the word the lesson of its own wondrous harmony; and his science, instead of a meteor that lures from the greater light of Revelation serves him as a pedestal on which the stability of Scripture is more firmly upholden.

The man who is accustomed to view aright the uniformity of Nature's sequences, will be more impressed with the certainty of that sequence, which is announced in the Bible between faith and salvation—and he of all others should reassure his hopes of immortality, when he reads, that the end of our faith is the salvation of our souls. In this secure and wealthy place let him take up his rest, and rejoice himself greatly with that God who has so multiplied upon him the evidences of His faithfulness. Let him henceforth feel that he is in the hands of one who never deviates, and who cannot lie—and who, as He never by one act of caprice hath mocked the dependence that is built on the foundation of human experience, so never by one act of treachery will He mock the dependence that is built on the foundation

of the divine testimony. And more particularly, let him think of Christ who hath all the promises in His hand, that to him also all power has been committed in heaven and in earth—and that presiding therefore, as He does, over that visible administration, of which constancy is the unfailing attribute, He by this hath given us the best pledge of a truth that abideth the same, to-day, and yesterday, and for ever.

We are aware, that no argument can of itself work in you the faith of the Gospel—that words, and reasons, and illustrations, may be multiplied without end, and yet be of no efficacy—that if the simple manifestation of the Spirit be withheld, the expounder of Scripture, and of all its analogies with Creation or Providence, will lose his labour—and while it is his part to prosecute these to the uttermost, yet nought will he find more surely and experimentally true, than that without a special interposition of light from on high, he runneth in vain, and wearieth himself in vain. It is for him to ply the instrument, it is for God to give unto it the power which availeth. We are told of Christ on His throne of mediatorship, that He hath all the energies of Nature at command, and up to this hour do we know with what a steady and unfaltering hand He hath wielded them. Look to the promise as equally steadfast, of “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”—and come even now to His own appointed ordinance in the like confidence of a fellowship with Him, as you would to any of the scenes or ordinations of Nature, and in the confidence that there the Lord of Nature will prove Himself the same that He has ever been.\* The blood that was announced many centuries ago to cleanse from all sin, cleanseth still. The body which hath borne in all past ages the iniquity of believers, beareth it still. That faith which appropriates Christ and all the benefits of His purchase to the soul, still performs the same office. And that magnificent economy of Nature which was established at the first, and so abideth, is but the symbol of that higher economy of grace which continueth to this day according to all its ordinances.

“Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,” says the Saviour, “shall never die.” When you sit down at His table, you eat the bread, and you drink the wine by which these are represented—and if this be done worthily, if there be a right correspondence between the hand and the heart in this sacramental service, then by faith do you receive the benefits of

\* This Sermon was delivered on the morning of a Communion Sabbath.

the shed blood, and the broken body; and your so doing will as surely as any succession takes place in the instituted courses of Nature, be followed up by your blessed immortality. And the brighter your hopes of glory hereafter, the holier will you be in all your acts and affections here. The character even now will receive a tinge from the prospect that is before you—and the habitual anticipation of heaven will bring down both of its charity and its sacredness upon your heart. He who hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as Christ is pure—and even from the present, if a true approach to the gate of His sanctuary, will you carry a portion of His spirit away with you. In partaking of these His consecrated elements, you become partakers of His gentleness and devotion, and unwearied beneficence—and because like Him in time, you will live with Him through eternity.



## DISCOURSE II.

ON THE CONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER AND THE  
UNIFORMITY OF NATURE.

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”—2 PETER iii. 3, 4.

THE infidelity spoken of in our text, had for its basis the stability of Nature, or rested on the imagination that her economy was perpetual and everlasting—and every day of Nature’s continuance added to the strength and inveteracy of this delusion. In proportion to the length of her past endurance, was there a firm confidence felt in her future perpetuity. The longer that Nature lasted, or the older she grew, her final dissolution was held to be all the more improbable—till nothing seemed so unlikely to the atheistical men of that period, as the intervention of a God with a system of visible things, which looked so unchanging and so indestructible. It was like the contest of experience and faith, in which the former grew every day stronger and stronger, and the latter weaker and weaker, till at length it was wholly extinguished; and men in the spirit of defiance or ridicule, braved the announcement of a Judge who should appear at the end of the world, and mocked at the promise of His coming.

But there is another direction which infidelity often takes, beside the one specified in our text. It not only perverts to its own argument, what experience tells of the stability of Nature; and so concludes that we have nothing to fear from the mandate of a God laying sudden arrest and termination on its processes. It also perverts what experience tells of the uniformity of Nature; and so concludes that we have nothing either to hope or to fear from the intervention of a God during the continuance or the currency of these processes. Beside making Nature independent of God for its duration, which they hold to be everlasting, they would also make Nature to be independent of God

for its course, which they hold to be unalterable. They tell us of the rigid and undeviating constancy from which Nature is never known to fluctuate; and that in her immutable laws in the march and regularity of her orderly progressions, they can discover no trace whatever of any interposition by the finger of a Deity. It is not only that all things continue to be as they were from the beginning of creation—causes and effects following each other in wonted and invariable succession, and the same circumstances ever issuing in the same consequents as before. With such a system of things, there is no room in their creed or in their imagination for the actings of a God. To their eye Nature proceeds by the sure footsteps of a mute and unconscious materialism; nor can they recognise in its evolutions those characters of the spontaneous or the wilful, which bespeak a living God to have had any concern with it. He may have formed the mundane system at the first: He may have devised for matter its properties and its laws: but these properties, they tell us, never change; these laws never are relaxed or receded from. And so we may as well bid the storm itself cease from its violence, as supplicate the unseen Being whom we fancy to be sitting aloft and to direct the storm. This they hold to be a superstitious imagination, which all their experience of Nature and of Nature's immutability forbids them to entertain. By the one infidelity, they have banished a God from the throne of judgment. By the other infidelity, they have banished a God from the throne of providence. By the first, they tell us that a God has nought to do with the consummation of Nature; or rather, that Nature has no consummation. By the second, they tell us that a God has nought to do with the history of Nature. The first infidelity would expunge from our creed the doctrine of a coming judgment. The second would expunge from it the doctrine of a present and a special providence, and the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer.

Now this last, though not just the infidelity of the text—yet being very much the same with it in principle—we hold it sufficiently textual, though we make it, and not the other, the subject of our present argument. We admit the uniformity of visible nature—a lesson forced upon us by all experience. We admit that as far as our observation extends, Nature has always proceeded in one invariable order—insomuch that the same antecedents have, without exception, been ever followed up by the same consequents; and that, saving the well-accredited miracles

of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, all things have so continued since the beginning of the creation.

We admit that, never in our whole lives have we witnessed as the effect of man's prayer, any infringement made on the known laws of the universe; or that Nature by receding from her constancy, to the extent that we have discovered it, has ever in one instance yielded to his supplicating cry. We admit that by no importunity from the voice of faith, or from any number and combination of voices, have we seen an arrest or a shift laid on the ascertained courses, whether of the material or the mental economy; or a single fulfilment of any sort, brought about in contravention, either to the known properties of any substance, or to the known principles of any established succession in the history of Nature. These are our experiences; and we are aware the very experiences which ministered to the infidelity of our text, and do minister to the practical infidelity of thousands in the present day—yet, in opposition to, or rather notwithstanding these experiences, universal and unexcepted though they be, do we affirm the doctrine of a superintending providence, as various and as special, as our necessities—the doctrine of a perpetual interposition from above, as manifoldly and minutely special, as are the believing requests which ascend from us to Heaven's throne.

We feel the importance of the subject, both in its application to the judgment that now hangs over us,\* and to the infidelity of the present times. But we cannot hope to be fully understood without your most strenuous and sustained attention—an attention, however, which we request may be kept up to the end, even though certain parts in the train of observation may not have been followed by you. What some may lose in those passages, where the subject is presented in the form of a general argument, may again be recovered, when we attempt to establish our doctrine by Scripture, or to illustrate it by instances taken from the history of human affairs. In one way or other, you may seize on the reigning principle of that explanation, by which we endeavour to reconcile the efficacy of prayer with the uniformity of experience. And our purpose shall have been obtained, if we can at all help you to a greater confidence in the reality of a superintending providence, to a greater comfort and confidence in the act of making your requests known unto God.

\* This Sermon was preached during the prevalence of cholera.

Let us first give our view in all its generality, in the hope that any obscurity which may rest upon it in this form will be dissipated or cleared up in the subsequent appeals that we shall make, both to the lessons of the Bible, and to the lessons of human experience.

We grant, then, we unreservedly grant, the uniformity of visible nature; and now let us compute how much, or how little, it amounts to. Grant of all our progressions, that, as far as our eye can carry us, they are invariable; and then let us only reflect how short a way we can trace any of them upwards. In speculating on the origin of an event, we may be able to assign the one which immediately preceded, and term it the proximate cause; or even ascend by two or three footsteps, till we have discovered some anterior event which we term the remote cause. But how soon do we arrive at the limit of possible investigation, beyond which if we attempt to go, we lose ourselves among the depths and the obscurities of a region that is unknown! Observation may conduct us a certain length backwards in the train of causes and effects; but, after having done its uttermost, we feel, that, above and beyond its loftiest place of ascent, there are still higher steps in the train, which we vainly try to reach, and find them inaccessible. It is even so throughout all philosophy. After having arrived at the remotest cause which man can reach his way to, we shall ever find there are higher and remoter causes still, which distance all his powers of research, and so will ever remain in deepest concealment from his view. Of this higher part of the train he has no observation. Of these remoter causes, and their mode of succession, he can positively say nothing. For aught he knows, they may be under the immediate control of higher beings in the universe; or, like the upper part of a chain, a few of whose closing links are all that is visible to us, they may be directly appended to the throne, and at all times subject to the instant pleasure of a prayer-hearing God. And it may be by a responsive touch at the higher, and not the lower part of the progression, that He answers our prayers. It may be not by an act of intervention among those near and visible causes, where intervention would be a miracle; it may be by an unseen, but not less effectual act of intervention, among the remote and therefore the occult causes, that He adapts Himself to the various wants, and meets the various petitions of His children. If it be in the latter way that He conducts the affairs of His daily

government—then may He rule by a providence as special as are the needs and the occasions of His family; and with an ear open to every cry, might He provide for all, and minister to all without one infringement on the uniformity of visible nature. If the responsive touch be given at the lower part of the chain, then the answer to prayer is by miracle, or by a contravention to some of the known sequences of Nature. But if the responsive touch be given at a sufficiently higher part of the chain, then the answer is as effectually made, but not by miracle, and without violence to any one succession of history or nature which philosophy has ascertained—because the reaction to the prayer strikes at a place that is higher than the highest investigations of philosophy. It is not by a visible movement within the region of human observation, but by an invisible movement in the transcendental region above it, that the prayer is met and responded to. The Supernal Power of the Universe, the mighty and unseen Being who sits aloft, and has been significantly styled the Cause of causes—He, in immediate contact with the upper extremities of every progression, there puts forth an overruling influence which tells and propagates downwards to the lower extremities; and so, by an agency placed too remote either for the eye of sense or for all the instruments of science to discover, may God, in answer if He choose to prayer, fix and determine every series of events—of which, nevertheless, all that man can see is but the uniformity of the closing footsteps—a few of the last causes and effects following each other in their wonted order. It is thus that we reconcile all the experience which man has of Nature's uniformity, with the effect and significancy of his prayers to the God of Nature. It is thus that at one and the same time do we live under the care of a presiding God, and among the regularities of a harmonious universe.

These views are in beautiful accordance with the simple and sublime theology unfolded to us in the Book of Job—where, whether in the movements of the animated kingdom below, or the great evolutions that take place in the upper regions of the atmosphere, the phenomena and the processes of visible nature are sketched with a masterly hand. It is in the midst of these scenes and impressive descriptions, that we are told—“Lo, these are parts of his ways.” The translation does not say what parts; but the original does. They are but the lower parts—the endings as it were of the different processes—the last and

lowest footsteps, which are all that science can investigate; and of which, throughout the whole of her limited ascent, she has traced the uniformity. But she has traced it a very short way: or, in the language of the patriarch, who estimates aright the achievements of philosophy—"How little a portion is heard of him!"—how few the known footsteps which are beneath the veil, to the unknown steps and workings which are above it; and so, the thunder, or rather the inward and secret movements of His power, who can understand?

"He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them. He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it. He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end. The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud. By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent. Lo, these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him! but the thunder of his power who can understand?"—Job xxvi. 8-14.

The last sentence of this magnificent passage were better translated thus:—"These are the parts or the lower endings of his ways; but the secret working of his power who can understand?"

That part of the economy of the divine administration, in virtue of which God works, not without but by secondary causes, is frequently intimated in the Book of Psalms.

"Who maketh his angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire."—Ps. civ. 4.

Or, as it might have been translated—"Who maketh the winds his messengers, and the flaming fire his servant."

But without the aid of any emendations in our version, this subserviency of visible nature to the invisible God, is distinctly laid before us in the following passages:—

"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their dis-

tresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."—Ps. cvii. 23-31.

He raises the tempest not without the wind, but by the wind. In the one way it would have been a miracle; in the other way it is alike effectual, but without any change in the properties or laws of visible nature—without what we commonly understand by a miracle. He does not bring the vessel against the wind to its desired haven; but He makes the storm a calm, and so the waves thereof are still. Our Saviour also bade the winds into peace; and the miracle there lay in the effect following on the heard utterance of His voice. A voice no less effectual though unheard by us, overrules at all times the working of Nature's elements; and brings the ordinary processes, as well as the marked and miraculous exception to them, under the control of a divine agency.

"Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain: he bringeth the wind out of his treasures."—Ps. cxxxv. 6, 7.

Here, without any change of translation, we are told of the subserviency of the visible instruments, to the invisible but real agency of Him who wields them at His pleasure. In this passage, the winds are plainly represented to us as the messengers of God, and the flaming fire as His servant. He changes no properties, and no visible processes—working, not without the wind, but by it—not without the electric matter, but by it—not without the rain, but by it—not without the vapour, but by it. Let the philosopher tell how far back he can go, in exploring the method and order of these respective agencies. Then we have only to point further back and ask—on what evidence he can tell, that the fiat and the finger of a God, are not there? We grant the observed order to be invariable, save when God chooses to interpose by miracle. But whether He does or not—from that chamber of His hidden operations, which philosophy has not found its way to, can He so direct all, so subordinate all, that whatever the Lord pleases, that does He in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

"Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:

Fire and hail; snow and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word."—Ps. cxlviii. 7, 8.

The stormy wind fulfilleth His word.

Our last example shall be from the New Testament. "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."—Acts xiv. 17.

This last example will prepare you to go along with one of the particular instances we are just to bring forward, of a special prayer met by a special fulfilment.

We are thus enabled to perceive what the respective provinces are of philosophy and faith. Every event in Nature or history has a cause in some prior event that went before it, and that again in another, and that again in another still higher than itself in this scale of precedency; and so might we climb our ascending way from cause to cause, from consequent to antecedent—till the investigation has been carried upwards, from the farthest possible verge of human discovery. There it is that the domain of observation or of philosophy terminates; but we mistake, if we think that there the progression, whose terms or whose footsteps we have traced thus far, also terminates. Beyond this limit we cannot track the pathway of causation—not because the pathway ceases, but because we have lost sight of it—having now retired from view among the depths and mysteries of an unknown region, which we, with our bounded faculties, cannot enter. This may be termed the region of faith, placed as it were above the region of experience. The things which are done in the higher, have an overruling influence by lines of transmission on all that happens in the lower—yet without one breach or interruption to the uniformity of visible nature. Whatever is done in the transcendental region—be it by the influence of prayer; by the immediate finger of God; by the ministry of angels; by the spontaneous movements, whether of displeasure or of mercy above, responding to the sins or to the supplicating cries that ascend from earth's inhabitants below—that will pass by a descending influence into the palpable region of sense and observation—yet, from the moment it comes within its limits, will it proceed without the semblance of a miracle, but by the march and the movement of Nature's regularity, to its final consummation. God hath in wisdom ordained a regimen of general laws; and that man might gather from the memory of the past those lessons of observation which serve for the guid-



ance of the future, He hath enacted that all those successions shall be invariable which have their place and their fulfilment within the world of sensible experience. Yet God has not on that account made the world independent of Himself. He keeps a perpetual hold on all its events and processes notwithstanding. He does not dis sever Himself, for a single instant, from the government and the guardianship of His own universe; and can still, notwithstanding all we see of Nature's rigid uniformity, adapt the forthgoings of His power to all the wants and all the prayers of His dependent family. For this purpose, He does not need to stretch forth His hand on the inferior and the visible links of any progression, so as to shift the known successions of experience; or at all to intermeddle with the lessons and the laws of this great schoolmaster. He may work in secret, and yet perform all His pleasure—not by the achievement of a miracle on Nature's open platform, but by the touch of one or other of those master-springs which lie within the recesses of her inner laboratory. There, and at His place of supernal command by the fountain-heads of influence, He can turn whithersoever He will the machinery of our world, and without the possibility by human eye of detecting the least infringement on any of its processes—at once upholding the regularity of visible nature, and the supremacy of Nature's invisible God.

But we are glad to make our escape, and now to make it conclusively, from the obscurer part of our reasoning on this subject—although, most assuredly, these are not the times for passing it wholly by; or for withholding aught which can make in favour of the much-derided cause of humble and earnest piety. But, instead of propounding our doctrine in the terms of a general argument, let us try the effect of a few special instances—by which, perhaps, we might more readily gain the consent of your understanding to our views.

When the sigh of the midnight storm sends fearful agitation into a mother's heart as she thinks of her sailor boy now exposed to its fury on the waters of a distant ocean—these stern disciples of a hard and stern infidelity would, on this notion of a rigid and impracticable constancy in Nature, forbid her prayers—holding them to be as impotent and vain, though addressed to the God who has all the elements in His hand, as if lifted up with senseless importunity to the raving elements themselves. Yet Nature would strongly prompt the aspiration; and, if there be truth in our argument, there is nothing in the constitution of the universe

to forbid its accomplishment. God might answer the prayer, not by unsettling the order of secondary causes—not by reversing any of the wonted successions that are known to take place in the ever-restless, ever-heaving atmosphere—not by sensible miracle among those nearer footsteps which the philosopher has traced; but by the touch of an immediate hand among the deep recesses of materialism, which are beyond the ken of all his instruments. It is thence that the Sovereign of Nature might bid the wild uproar of the elements into silence. It is there that the virtue comes out of Him, which passes like a winged messenger from the invisible to the visible; and, at the threshold of separation between these two regions, impresses the direction of the Almighty's will on the remotest cause which science can mount her way to. From this point in the series, the path of descent along the line of nearer and proximate causes may be rigidly invariable; and in respect of the order, the precise undeviating order, wherewith they follow each other, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. The heat, and the vapour, and the atmospherical precipitates, and the consequent moving forces by which either to raise a new tempest or to lay an old one—all these may proceed, and without one hairbreadth of deviation, according to the successions of our established philosophy—yet each be but the obedient messenger of that voice which gave forth its command at the fountain-head of the whole operation; which commissioned the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, and made lightnings for the rain, and brought the wind out of His treasuries. These are the palpable steps of the process; but an unseen influence behind the farthest limit of man's boasted discoveries may have set them agoing. And that influence may have been accorded to prayer—the power that moves Him who moves the universe; and who, without violence to the known regularities of Nature, can either send forth the hurricane over the face of the deep, or recall it at His pleasure. Such is the joyful persuasion of faith, and proud philosophy cannot disprove it. A woman's feeble cry may have overruled the elemental war; and hushed into silence this wild frenzy of the winds and the waves; and evoked the gentler breezes from the cave of their slumbers; and wafted the vessel of her dearest hopes, and which held the first and fondest of her earthly treasures, to its desired haven.

And so of other prayers. It is not without instrumentality, but by means of it, that they are answered. The fulfilment is

preceded by the accustomed series of causes and effects; and preceded as far upward as the eye of man can trace the pedigree of sensible causation. Were it by a break anywhere in the traceable part of this series that the prayer was answered, then its fulfilment would be miraculous. But without a miracle the prayer is answered as effectually. Thus, for example, is met the cry of a people under famine for a speedy and plenteous harvest—not by the instant appearance of the ripened grain at the bidding of a voice from heaven—not preternaturally cherished into maturity in the midst of storms; but ushered onwards by a grateful succession of shower and sunshine to a prosperous consummation. An abundant harvest is granted to prayer—yet without violence either to the laws of the vegetable physiology, or to any of the known laws by which the alterations of the weather are determined. It must be acknowledged by every philosopher, how soon it is that we arrive in both departments on the confines of deepest mystery: and let the constancy of patent and palpable Nature be as unaltered and unalterable as it may, God reserves to Himself the place of mastery and command, whether among the arcana of vegetation or the depths of meteorology. He may at once permit a most rigid uniformity to the visible workings of Nature's mechanism—while among its invisible, which are also its antecedent workings, He retains that station of pre-eminence and power, whence He brings all things to pass according to His pleasure. It is not by sending bread from the upper storehouses of the firmament that He answers this prayer. It is by sending rain and fruitful seasons. The intermediate machinery of Nature is not cast aside but pressed into the service; and the prayer is answered by a secret touch from the finger of the Almighty, which sets all its parts and all its processes agoing. With the eye of sense man sees nothing but Nature revolving in her wonted cycles, and the months following each other in bright and beautiful succession. In the eye of faith, ay, and of sound philosophy, every year of smiling plenty upon earth is a year crowned with the goodness of Heaven.

But to touch on that which more immediately concerns us, let us now instance prayer for health. We ask, if here philosophy has taken possession of the whole domain, and left no room for the prerogatives and the exercise of faith—no hope for prayer? Has the whole intermediate space between the first cause and the ultimate phenomena been so thoroughly explored, and the rigid uniformity of every footstep in the series been so fixed and ascer-

tained by observation, as to preclude the rationality of prayer, and leave it without a meaning, because without the possibility of a fulfilment? Where is the physician or the physiologist who can tell that he has made the ascent from one prognostic or one predisposition to another—till he reached even to the primary fountain-head of that influence which either medicates or distempers the human frame, and found throughout an adamantine chain of necessity, not to be broken by the sufferer's imploring cry? We ask the guardians of our health, how far upon the pathway of causation the discoveries of medical science have carried them; and whether, above and beyond their farthest look into the mysteries of our framework, there are not higher mysteries, where a God may work in secret, and the hand of the Omnipotent be stretched forth to heal or to destroy? It is thence He may answer prayer. It is from this summit of ascendancy that He may direct all the processes of the human constitution—yet without violating in any instance the uniformity of the few last and visible footsteps. Because science has traced, and so far determined this uniformity, she has not therefore exiled God from His own universe. She has not forced the Deity to quit His hold of its machinery, or to forego by one iota the most perfect command of all its evolutions. His superintendence is as close and continuous and special, as if all things were done by the visible intervention of His hand. Without superstition, with the fullest recognition of science in all its prerogatives and all its glories—might we feel our immediate dependence on God; and, even in this our philosophic day, and notwithstanding all that philosophy has made known to us, might we still assert and vindicate the higher philosophy of prayer—asking of God, as patriarchs and holy men of old did before us, for safety and sustenance and health and all things.

And if ever in the dealings of God with the people of the earth, if ever science had less of the territory and faith had more of it, it is in that undisclosed mystery which still hangs over us; which now for many months has shed baleful influences on your crowded city; and whereof no man can tell whether in another day or another hour, it might not descend with fell swoop into the midst of his own family—entering there with rude unceremonious footstep, and hurrying to one of its rapid and inglorious funerals the dearest of the inmates. Never on any other theme did philosophy make more entire demonstration of her own helplessness; and perhaps at the very first footstep of

the investigation, or on the question of the proximate cause, the controversy is loudest of all. But however justly of the proximate cause discovery may be made, or however remotely among the anterior causes the investigation might be carried, never will proud philosophy be able to annul the intervention of a God, or purchase to herself the privilege of mocking at the poor man's prayer. Indeed, amid the exuberance and variety of speculation on this unsettled and unknown subject, there was one remote cause assigned for this pestilent visitation, which, so far from shutting out, rather suggests, and that most forcibly, the intervention of a God immediately before it. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria: and they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes."\* We hope to have made it plain to you, let this or any other cause be found the true one, that however high the path of discovery may have been traced, yet higher still there is place for the finger of a God above to regulate all the designs of a special providence, and to move in conformity with all the accepted prayers of His family below. But among the scoffers of our latter day, even in the absence or the want of all discovery, the finger of a God is disowned; and it seems to mark how resolute and at the same time how hopeless is the infidelity of modern times, that just in proportion to our ignorance of all the secondary or the sensible causes, is our haughty refusal of any homage to the first cause. It is passing strange of this disease, that after having baffled every attempt to find out its dependence on aught that is on earth, the idea of its dependence on the will of Heaven should of all others have been laughed most impiously to scorn. The voice of derision and defiance was first heard in our high places; and thence it passed, as if by infection, into general society. And so, many have disowned the power and the will of the Deity in this visitation. They most unphilosophically, we think, as well as impiously, have spurned at prayer.

But we cannot pass away from this part of our subject, without adverting to a recent event, the thought of which is at present irresistibly obtruded on us, and by which this parish and congregation but a few weeks ago have been deprived of one of the most conspicuous of our office-bearers—one who constitution-

\* Isaiah vii. 18, 19.

ally the kindest and most indulgent of men, was the most alive of all I ever knew to the wants and the miseries of our common nature; and who, finely alive to all the impulses and soft touches of humanity, laboured night and day in the vocation of doing good continually. But instead of saying that he laboured, I should say that he luxuriated in well-doing; for never was a heart more attuned to ready and responsive agreement with the calls of benevolence than his, and sooner would I believe of Nature that she had receded from her constancy, than of him that e'er

“ He look'd unmoved on misery's languid eye,  
Or heard her sinking voice without a sigh.”

Of all the recollections which the friends either of my youth or of my manhood have left behind them in this land of dying men, there is none more beautifully irradiated—whether I look back on the mildness of his Christian worth, or on those sensibilities of an open and generous and finely attempered spirit, which gives such a charm to human companionship. And as the second great law is like unto the first; so that love of his which went forth so diffusively amongst his fellows upon earth, we humbly hope, was at once the indication and the consequent of a love that ascended with high and habitual aspiration to God in heaven. It was through a brief and tremendous agony that he was carried from the world of sense to the world of spirits; and yet it is a happiness to be told that the faith and hope of the gospel lighted up a halo over his expiring moments, and that, ere death had closed his eyes, he, through nearly an hour of audible prayer gave his last testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus.\*

But to recall ourselves from this theme of sadness, we trust you will now understand of every event in Nature or history, that each in the order of causation is preceded by a train which went before it, and that man's observations can extend more or less a certain way along this train, till they are lost in the undiscovered and at length undiscoverable recesses which are placed beyond the cognisance of the human faculties. Now it is because of the higher and unknown part which belongs to every such series, that we bid you respect the lessons of piety, for God hath not so constructed the universe as to remove it

\* This notice refers to John Wilson, Esq., silk-merchant in Glasgow, who was Kirk-Treasurer of St. John's, and to the deep regret of all who knew him, was carried off by cholera in the neighbourhood of Glasgow.

from the hold of His own special management and superintendence; and therefore, not in one thing the Bible tells us, but in every thing, we should make our requests known unto God. But again, it is because of the lower and the known or ascertained and strictly uniform part which belongs to every series, that we bid you respect the lessons of experience; for God did not so conduct the affairs of His universe, as to thrust forth His invisible hand among its visible successions; but while He keeps a perpetual and ascendant hold among the springs of that machinery which is behind the curtain, He leaves untouched all those wonted regularities, which on the stage of observation are patent to human eyes. Now these are the respective domains of philosophy and faith, and this is the use to be made of them. Looking to the one, we learn the subordination of all Nature. Looking to the other, we learn the constancy of visible nature. These great truths harmonize; and between the lessons which they give, there is the fullest harmony. He who is enlightened and acts upon both is at one and the same time a man of prudence and a man of prayer; who never loses his confidence in God, yet, as awake to the manifestations of experience as if they were the manifestations of the divine will, never counts upon a miracle. He holds perpetual converse with heaven; yet shapes his earthly conduct by his earthly circumstances. In his habits of diligence he proceeds on the uniformity of visible nature, and he does accordingly. In his habits of devotion, he knows that there is a visible power above which subordinates all Nature, and he prays accordingly. He is neither the mystic who will not act, nor is he the infidel who will not pray. He knows how to combine both, or how to combine wisdom with piety—that rare and beauteous combination unknown to the world at large, yet realized by many a cottage patriarch, who, without attempting, without being capable in fact of any profound or philosophical adjustment between them, but on his simple understanding alone of Scripture lessons and Scripture examples, unites the most strenuous diligence in the use of means, with the strictest dependence upon God. Without the combination of these two, there has been nothing great, nothing effective in the history of the church; and, on the other hand, we find that all the most illustrious, whether in philanthropy or in Christian patriotism, from the apostle Paul to the highest names in the descending history of the world, as Augustine, and Luther, and Knox, and Howard, that, superadding the wisdom

of experience to a sense of deepest piety, they were at once men of performance and men of prayer.

But let us look for a moment to the highest example of all, even that of our Saviour when on earth; for in the history of His temptation will the eye of the diligent observer recognise an application and a moral, which serve, we think very finely, to illustrate our whole argument.

The first proposal of the adversary was, that, because an-hungered by the abstinence of forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, He should turn stones into bread; and the reply of our Saviour that "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word which cometh out of the mouth of God," bespoke His confidence in that Supreme Power which overrules all Nature. Now, observe how this is followed up by the tempter:—Since such His confidence, I may perhaps prevail upon Him to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, employing the very argument He just has used, even the overruling power of that God who can bear Him up by the intervention of angels, lest He dash His foot against a stone. The reply—"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," tells us, that the same Being who overrules all Nature, never interferes but for some worthy and great purpose to thwart the established successions of visible nature; and that it is wrong, it is wanton, in any of His creatures so to act, as if He counted upon such an interference. It is a noble lesson for us never to traverse or neglect the means which experience hath told us are effectual for good; and never to brave, but at the call of imperious duty, the exposures which the same experience has told us, on our knowledge or recollection of Nature's established processes, are followed up by evil. Our Saviour would not in defiance to the law of gravitation, cast Himself off from that place of security which upheld Him against its power. And neither should we ever, though in defiance but to the probable law of contagion, or by what (to borrow a usual phrase) might well be termed a tempting of Providence, refuse those places or cast away those measures of security, that are found to protect us against the virulence of this destroyer. In a word, between the wisdom of piety and the wisdom of experience there is most profound harmony—unknown to the infidel, and so he hath cast off prayer; unknown to the fanatic, and so he hath cast prudence away from him.

And we appeal to you, my brethren, if there be not much in the state and recent history of our nation to confirm these views.



We rejoiced in the appointment several months ago of a national fast, and that notwithstanding the contempt and annoyance of the many infidel manifestations to which the appointment had been exposed—hoping, as we then did, that it would meet with a dutiful and a general response from the people of the land; and perceiving afterwards, in our limited sphere, the obvious solemnity, and we trust in a goodly number of instances, the deep and heart-felt sacredness of its observation among our families. It is well that there should be a public and a prayerful recognition of God in the midst of us; and we have failed in our argument, we have failed, whether from the obscurity of its illustrations or the obscurity of its terms, in obtaining for it the sympathy of your understandings—if you perceive not, that, in the distinct relation of cause and effect, there is a real substantive connexion between the supplications which ascend for health and safety from the midst of a land, and the actual warding off of disease and death from its habitations. But in fullest harmony with this it is also well, I would go farther and say there is no infringement upon deepest piety in pronouncing it indispensable—that while we invoke the Heavenly Agent who sitteth above for every effectual blessing, all the earthly means and earthly instruments should be in complete and orderly preparation. We are aware that in many places and on many occasions, these have been rebelled against.\* And it but enhances the lesson, beside carrying a most impressive rebuke, both to the fanaticism of an ill-understood Christianity, and to the ignorant frenzy of an ill-educated, and, in respect to the woful deficiency both of churches and schools, we would say a neglected population—that just in those places where the offered help of the physician was most strenuously and most ungratefully resisted, and at times indeed by violence overborne, that there it was where the disease reasserted its power, and as if with the hand of an avenger, shook menace and terror among the families. As if the same God who bids us in His word make request unto Him in all things, would furthermore tell us by His Providence, that, in no one thing will He permit a heedless invasion on the regularities of that course which He him-

\* In Edinburgh, the metropolis of medical science, a vigorous system of expedients was instituted; and nothing could exceed the promptitude and the watchfulness and the activity, at a moment's call, wherewith the disease was met and repressed at every point of its outbreaks. And we cannot imagine a more striking demonstration for the importance of human agency, diligently operating on all the resources which Nature and experience have placed within our reach, than is furnished by a comparison between the perfection of our city arrangements, and the fewness of our city deaths.

self has established ; that with His own hand He ordained the footsteps of Nature, and He will chastise the presumption of those who shall think to contravene the ordinance ; that experience is the schoolmaster authorized by Him for the government and guidance of His family on earth, and that He will resent the outrage done to her authority whenever her lessons or her laws are wantonly violated.

In conclusion, let us observe that, on the one hand, we shall be glad if aught that has been said will help to conciliate our mere religionists to the lessons of experience and of sound philosophy ; and, in opposition to those senseless prejudices, by which they have often brought the most unmerited derision and discredit on their own cause, we would remind them that it is not all philosophy which Scripture denounces, but only vain philosophy—it is not all science which it deprecates, but only the science falsely so called. On the other hand, we should rejoice in witnessing the mere philosopher or man of secular and experimental wisdom, more conciliated than he is to the lessons of Religion, and to that humble faith which is the great and actuating spirit of its observations and its pieties and its prayers. We have heard that the study of Natural Science disposes to Infidelity. But we feel persuaded that this is a danger only associated with a slight and partial, never with a deep and adequate and comprehensive view of its principles. It is very possible that the conjunction between science and scepticism may at present be more frequently realized than in former days ; but this is only because, in spite of all that is alleged about this our more enlightened day and more enlightened public, our science is neither so deeply founded nor of such firm and thorough staple as it wont to be. We have lost in depth what we have gained in diffusion—having neither the massive erudition, nor the gigantic scholarship, nor the profound and well-laid philosophy of a period that has now gone by ; and it is to this that infidelity stands indebted for her triumphs among the scoffers and the superficialists of a half-learned generation.

## DISCOURSE III.

## THE TRANSITORY NATURE OF VISIBLE THINGS.

“The things which are seen are temporal.”—2 CORINTHIANS iv. 18.

THE assertion that the things which are seen are temporal, holds true in the absolute and universal sense of it. They had a beginning, and they will have an end. Should we go upward through the stream of ages that are past, we come to a time when they were not. Should we go onward through the stream of ages that are before us, we come to a time when they will be no more. It is indeed a most mysterious flight which the imagination ventures upon, when it goes back to the eternity that is behind us—when it mounts its ascending way through the millions and the millions of years that are already gone through, and stop where it may, it finds the line of its march always lengthening beyond it, and losing itself in the obscurity of as far removed a distance as ever. It soon reaches the commencement of visible things, or that point in its progress when God made the heavens and the earth. They had a beginning, but God had none; and what a wonderful field for the fancy to expatiate on, when we get above the era of created worlds, and think of that period when, in respect of all that is visible, the immensity around us was one vast and unpeopled solitude. But God was there, in His dwelling-place, for it is said of Him, that He inhabits eternity; and the Son of God was there, for we read of the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. The mind cannot sustain itself under the burden of these lofty contemplations. It cannot lift the curtain which shrouds the past eternity of God. But it is good for the soul to be humbled under a sense of its incapacity. It is good to realize the impression which too often abandons us, that He made us, and not we ourselves. It is good to feel how all that is temporal lies in passive and prostrate subordination before the will of the uncreated God. It is good to know how little a portion it is

that we see of Him and of His mysterious ways. It is good to lie at the feet of His awful and unknown majesty—and while secret things belong to Him, it is good to bring with us all the helplessness and docility of children to those revealed lessons which belong to us and to our children.

But this is not the sense in which the temporal nature of visible things is taken up by the apostle. It is not that there is a time past in which they did not exist—but that there is a time to come in which they will exist no more. He calls them temporal, because the time and the duration of their existence will have an end. His eye is full upon futurity. It is the passing away of visible things in the time that is to come, and the ever-during nature of invisible things through the eternity that is to come, which the apostle is contemplating. Now, on this one point we say nothing about the positive annihilation of the matter of visible things. There is reason for believing, that some of the matter of our present bodies may exist in those more glorified and transformed bodies which we are afterwards to occupy. And for anything we know, the matter of the present world and of the present system may exist in those new heavens and that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. There may be a transfiguration of matter without a destruction of it—and therefore it is, that when we assert with the apostle in the text how things seen are temporal, we shall not say more than that the substance of these things, if not consigned back again to the nothing from which they had emerged, will be employed in the formation of other things totally different—that the change will be so great as that all old things may be said to have passed away, and all things to become new—that after the wreck of the last conflagration, the desolated scene will be re-peopled with other objects; the righteous will live in another world, and the eye of the glorified body will open on another field of contemplation from that which is now visible around us.

Now, in this sense of the word *temporal*, the assertion of my text may be carried round to all that is visible. Even those objects which men are most apt to count upon as unperishable, because, without any sensible decay they have stood the lapse of many ages, will not weather the lapse of eternity. This earth will be burnt up. The light of yonder sun will be extinguished. These stars will cease from their twinkling. The heavens will pass away as a scroll—and as to those solid and enormous masses which, like the firm world we tread upon, roll in mighty

circuit through the immensity around us, it seems the solemn language of revelation of one and all of them, that from the face of Him who sitteth on the throne, the earth and the heavens will fly away, and there will be found no place for them.

Even apart from the Bible, the eye of observation can witness in some of the hardest and firmest materials of the present system, the evidence of its approaching dissolution. What more striking, for example, than the natural changes which take place on the surface of the world, and which prove that the strongest of Nature's elements must, at last, yield to the operation of time and of decay—that yonder towering mountain, though propped by the rocky battlements which surround it, must at last sink under the power of corruption—that every year brings it nearer to its end—that at this moment it is wasting silently away, and letting itself down from the lofty eminence which it now occupies—that the torrent which falls from its side never ceases to consume its substance, and to carry it off in the form of sediment to the ocean—that the frost which assails it in winter loosens the solid rock, detaches it in pieces from the main precipice, and makes it fall in fragments to its base—that the power of the weather scales off the most flinty materials, and that the wind of heaven scatters them in dust over the surrounding country—that even though not anticipated by the sudden and awful convulsions of the day of God's wrath, Nature contains within itself the rudiments of decay—that every hill must be levelled with the plains, and every plain be swept away by the constant operation of the rivers which run through it—and that, unless renewed by the hand of the Almighty, the earth on which we are now treading must disappear in the mighty roll of ages and of centuries. We cannot take our flight to other worlds, or have a near view of the changes to which they are liable; but surely if this world, which, with its mighty apparatus of continents and islands, looks so healthful and so firm after the wear of many centuries, is posting visibly to its end, we may be prepared to believe that the principles of destruction are also at work in other provinces of the visible creation—and that though of old God laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of His hands, yet they shall perish; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, and as a vesture shall He change them, and they shall be changed.

We should be out of place in all this style of observation, did we not follow it up with the sentiment of the Psalmist, "These

shall perish, but thou shalt endure; for thou art the same, and thy years have no end." What a lofty conception does it give us of the majesty of God, when we think how He sits above and presides in high authority over this mighty series of changes—when after sinking under our attempts to trace Him through the eternity that is behind, we look on the present system of things, and are taught to believe that it is but a single step in the march of His grand administrations through the eternity that is before us—when we think of this goodly universe, summoned into being to serve some temporary evolution of His great and mysterious plan—when we think of the time when it shall be broken up, and out of its disordered fragments other scenes and other systems shall emerge—surely, when fatigued with the vastness of these contemplations, it well becomes us to do the homage of our reverence and wonder to the one Spirit which conceives and animates the whole, and to the one noble design which runs through all its fluctuations.

But there is another way in which the objects that are seen are temporal. The object may not merely be removed from us, but we may be removed from the object. The disappearance of this earth and of these heavens from us, we look upon through the dimness of a far-placed futurity. It is an event, therefore, which may regale our imagination; which may lift our mind by its sublimity; which may disengage us in the calm hour of meditation from the littleness of life and of its cares; and which may even throw a clearness and a solemnity over our intercourse with God. But such an event as this does not come home upon our hearts with the urgency of a personal interest. It does not carry along with it the excitement which lies in the nearness of an immediate concern. It does not fall with such vivacity upon our conceptions, as practically to tell on our pursuits or any of our purposes. It may elevate and solemnize us, but this effect is perfectly consistent with its having as little influence on the walk of the living, and the moving, and the acting man, as a dream of poetry. The preacher may think that he has done great things with his eloquence—and the hearers may think that great things have been done upon them—for they felt a fine glow of emotion, when they heard of God sitting in the majesty of His high counsels, over the progress and the destiny of created things. But the truth is, that all this kindling of devotion which is felt upon the contemplation of His greatness, may exist in the same bosom with an utter distaste for the holiness of His character;

with an entire alienation of the heart and of the habits from the obedience of His law; and above all, with a most nauseous and invincible contempt for the spiritualities of that revelation, in which He has actually made known His will and His ways to us. The devotion of mere taste is one thing—the devotion of principle is another. And as surely as a man may weep over the elegant sufferings of poetry, yet add to the real sufferings of life by peevishness in his family, and insolence among his neighbours—so surely may a man be wakened to rapture by the magnificence of God, while his life is deformed by its rebellions, and his heart rankles with all the foulness of idolatry against Him.

Well, then, let us try the other way of bringing the temporal nature of visible things to bear upon your interests. It is true that this earth and these heavens will at length disappear; but they may outlive our posterity for many generations. However, if they disappear not from us, we most certainly shall disappear from them. They will soon cease to be anything to you; and though the splendour and variety of all that is visible around us, should last for thousands of centuries, your eyes will soon be closed upon them. The time is coming when this goodly scene shall reach its positive consummation. But, in all likelihood, the time is coming much sooner, when you shall resign the breath of your nostrils, and bid a final adieu to everything around you. Let this earth and these heavens be as enduring as they may, to you they are fugitive as vanity. Time with its mighty strides, will soon reach a future generation, and leave the present in death and in forgetfulness behind it. The grave will close upon every one of you, and that is the dark and the silent cavern where no voice is heard, and the light of the sun never enters.

But more than this. Though we live too short a time to see the great changes which are carrying on in the universe, we live long enough to see many of its changes—and such changes, too, as are best fitted to warn and to teach us; even the changes which take place in society, made up of human beings as frail and as fugitive as ourselves. Death moves us away from many of those objects which are seen and temporal—but we live long enough to see many of these objects moved away from us—to see acquaintances falling every year—to see families broken up by the rough and unsparing hand of death—to see houses and neighbourhoods shifting their inhabitants—to see a new race and a new generation—and, whether in church or in market, to see unceasing changes in the faces of the people who repair to them.

We know well, that there is a poetic melancholy inspired by such a picture as this which is altogether unfruitful; and that totally apart from religion, a man may give way to the luxury of tears, when he thinks how friends drop away from him—how every year brings along with it some sad addition to the registers of death—how the kind and hospitable mansion is left without a tenant—and how, when you knock at a neighbour's door, you find that he who welcomed you and made you happy, is no longer there. O that we could impress by all this a salutary direction on the fears and on the consciences of individuals—that we could give them a living impression of that coming day when they shall severally share in the general wreck of the species—when each of you shall be one of the many whom the men of the next generation may remember to have lived in yonder street, or laboured in yonder manufactory—when they shall speak of you just as you speak of the men of the former generation—who when they died had a few tears dropped over their memory, and for a few years will still continue to be talked of. Oh, could we succeed in giving you a real and living impression of all this; and then may we hope to carry the lesson of John the Baptist with energy to your fears, "Flee from the coming wrath." But there is something so very deceiving in the progress of time. Its progress is so gradual. To-day is so like yesterday, that we are not sensible of its departure. We should make head against this delusion. We should turn to personal account every example of change or of mortality. When the clock strikes, it should remind you of the dying hour. When you hear the sound of the funeral bell, you should think that in a little time it will perform for you the same office. When you wake in the morning, you should think that there has been the addition of another day to the life that is past, and the subtraction of another day from the remainder of your journey. When the shades of the evening fall around you, you should think of the steady and invariable progress of time; how the sun moves and moves till it will see you out; and how it will continue to move after you die, and see out your children's children to the latest generations. Everything around us should impress the mutability of human affairs. An acquaintance dies—you will soon follow him. A family moves from the neighbourhood—learn that the works of man are given to change. New families succeed—sit loose to the world, and withdraw your affections from its unstable and fluctuating interests. Time is rapid, though we observe not its



rapidity. The days that are past appear like the twinkling of a vision. The days that are to come will soon have a period, and will appear to have performed their course with equal rapidity. We talk of our fathers and our grandfathers, who figured their day in the theatre of the world. In a little time we will be the ancestors of a future age. Posterity will talk of us as of the men that are gone, and our remembrance will soon depart from the face of the country. When we attend the burial of an acquaintance, we see the bones of the men of other times; in a few years our bodies will be mangled by the power of corruption, and be thrown up in loose and scattered fragments among the earth of the newly-made grave. When we wander among the tombstones of the churchyard, we can scarcely follow the mutilated letters that compose the simple story of the inhabitant below. In a little time, and the tomb that covers us will moulder by the power of the seasons—and the letters will be eaten away—and the story that was to perpetuate our remembrance, will elude the gaze of some future inquirer.

We know that time is short, but none of us knows how short. We know that it will not go beyond a certain limit of years; but none of us knows how small the number of years, or months, or days may be. For death is at work upon all ages. The fever of a few days may hurry the likeliest of us all from this land of mortality. The cold of a few weeks may settle into some lingering but irrecoverable disease. In one instant the blood of him who has the promise of many years may cease its circulation. Accident may assail us. A slight fall may precipitate us into eternity. An exposure to rain may lay us on the bed of our last sickness, from which we are never more to rise. A little spark may kindle the midnight conflagration, which lays a house and its inhabitants in ashes. A stroke of lightning may arrest the current of life in a twinkling. A gust of wind may overturn the vessel, and lay the unwary passenger in a watery grave. A thousand dangers beset us on the slippery path of this world; no age is exempted from them; and from the infant that hangs on its mother's bosom, to the old man who sinks under the decrepitude of years, we see death in all its woful and affecting varieties.

You may think it strange; but even still we fear we may have done little in the way of sending a fruitful impression into your consciences. We are too well aware of the distinction between seriousness of feeling and seriousness of principle, to think that upon the strength of any such moving representation as we are

now indulging in, we shall be able to dissipate that confounded spell which chains you to the world, to reclaim your wandering affections, or to send you back to your week-day business more pure and more heavenly. But sure we are you ought to be convinced, that all which binds you so cleavingly to the dust is infatuation and vanity; that there is something most lamentably wrong in your being carried away by the delusions of time—and this is a conviction which should make you feel restless and dissatisfied. We are well aware that it is not human eloquence or human illustration that can accomplish a victory over the obstinate principles of human corruption; and therefore it is that we feel as if we did not advance aright through a single step of a sermon, unless we look for the influences of that mighty Spirit who alone is able to enlighten and arrest you—and may employ even so humble an instrument as the voice of a fellow-mortal to send into your heart the inspiration of understanding.

We now shortly insist on the truth, that the things which are not seen are eternal. No man hath seen God at any time, and He is eternal. It is said of Christ—"Whom having not seen, we love, and he is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever." It is said of the Spirit, that, like the wind of heaven, He eludes the observation, and no man can tell of Him whence He cometh, or whither He goeth—and He is called the eternal Spirit, through whom the Son offered Himself up without spot unto God. We are quite aware that the idea suggested by the eternal things which are spoken of in our text, is heaven, with all its circumstances of splendour and enjoyment. This is an object which, even on the principles of taste, we take a delight in contemplating: and it is also an object set before us in the Scriptures, though with a very sparing and reserved hand. All the descriptions we have of heaven there are general, very general. We read of the beauty of the heavenly crown, of the unfading nature of the heavenly inheritance, of the splendour of the heavenly city—and these have been seized upon by men of imagination, who, in the construction of their fancied paradise, have embellished it with every image of peace, and bliss, and loveliness; and, at all events, have thrown over it that most kindling of all conceptions, the magnificence of eternity. Now, such a picture as this has the certain effect of ministering delight to every glowing and susceptible imagination. And here lies the deep-laid delusion which we have occasionally hinted at. A man listens, in the first instance, to a pathetic and highly-wrought

narrative on the vanities of time—and it touches him even to the tenderness of tears. He looks, in the second instance, to the fascinating perspective of another scene, rising in all the glories of immortality from the dark ruins of the tomb, and he feels within him all those ravishments of fancy, which any vision of united grandeur and loveliness would inspire. Take these two together, and you have a man weeping over the transient vanities of an ever-shifting world, and mixing with all this softness, an elevation of thought and of prospect, as he looks through the vista of a futurity losing itself in the mighty range of thousands and thousands of centuries. And at this point the delusion comes in, that here is a man who is all that religion would have him to be—a man weaned from the littleness of the paltry scene that is around him—soaring high above all the evanescence of things present and things sensible—and transferring every affection of his soul to the durabilities of a pure and immortal region. It were better if this high state of occasional impression on the matters of time and of eternity, had only the effect of imposing the falsehood on others, that the man who was so touched and so transported, had on that single account the temper of a candidate for heaven. But the falsehood takes possession of his own heart. The man is pleased with his emotions and his tears—and the interpretation he puts upon them is, that they come out of the fulness of a heart all alive to religion, and sensibly affected with its charms, and its seriousness, and its principle. Now, we venture to say, that there may be much of all this kind of enthusiasm with the very man who is not moving a single step towards that blessed eternity over which his fancy delights to expatiate. The moving representation of the preacher may be listened to as a pleasant song—and the entertained hearer return to all the inveterate habits of one of the children of this world. It is this which makes us fear that a power of deceitfulness may accompany the eloquence of the pulpit—that the wisdom of words may defeat the great object of a practical work upon the conscience—that a something short of a real business change in the heart and in the principles of acting may satisfy the man who listens, and admires, and resigns his every feeling to the magic of an impressive description—that, strangely compounded beings as we are, broken loose from God, and proving it by the habitual voidness of our hearts to a sense of His authority and of His will; that blind to the realities of another world, and slaves to the wretched infatuation which makes us cleave with the full bent

of our affections to the one by which we are visibly and immediately surrounded; that utterly unable, by nature, to live above the present scene, while its cares and its interests are plying us every hour with their urgency; that the prey of evil passions which darken and distract the inner man, and throw us at a wider distance from the holy Being who forbids the indulgence of them; and yet with all this weight of corruption about us, having a mind that can seize the vastness of some great conception, and can therefore rejoice in the expanding loftiness of its own thoughts, as it dwells on the wonders of eternity; and having hearts that can move to the impulse of a tender consideration, and can, therefore, sadden into melancholy at the dark picture of death, and its unrelenting cruelties; and having fancies that can brighten to the cheerful colouring of some pleasing and hopeful representation, and can, therefore, be soothed and animated when some sketch is laid before it of a pious family emerging from a common sepulchre, and on the morning of their joyful resurrection, forgetting all the sorrows and separations of the dark world that has now rolled over them.—Oh, my brethren, we fear it, we greatly fear it, that while busied with topics such as these, many a hearer may weep or be elevated, or take pleasure in the touching imagery that is made to play around him, while the dust of this perishable earth is all that his soul cleaves to—and its cheating vanities are all that his heart cares for, or his footsteps follow after.

The thing is not merely possible—but we see in it a stamp of likelihood to all that experience tells us of the nature or the habitudes of man. Is there no such thing as his having a taste for the beauties of landscape, and at the same time turning with disgust from what he calls the methodism of peculiar Christianity? Might not he be an admirer of poetry, and at the same time nauseate with his whole heart the doctrine and the language of the New Testament? Might not he have a fancy that can be regaled by some fair and well-formed vision of immortality, and at the same time have no practical hardihood whatever for the exercise of labouring in the prescribed way after the meat that endureth? Surely, surely, this is all very possible—and it is just as possible, and many we believe to be the instances we have of it in real life, when an eloquent description of heaven is exquisitely felt, and wakens in the bosom the raptures of the sincerest admiration, among those who feel an utter repugnancy to the heaven of the Bible—and are not moving a single inch through the narrowness of the path which leads to it.

## DISCOURSE IV.

ON THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH.

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—2 PETER iii. 13.

THERE is a limit to the revelations of the Bible about futurity, and it were a mental or spiritual trespass to go beyond it. The reserve which it maintains in its informations, we also ought to maintain in our inquiries—satisfied to know little on every subject, where it has communicated little, and feeling our way into regions which are at present unseen, no farther than the light of Scripture will carry us.

But while we attempt not to be "wise above that which is written," we should attempt, and that most studiously, to be wise up to that which is written. The disclosures are very few and very partial which are given to us of that bright and beautiful economy which is to survive the ruins of our present one. But still there are such disclosures—and on the principle of the things that are revealed belonging unto us, we have a right to walk up and down for the purpose of observation over the whole actual extent of them. What is made known of the details of immortality, is but small in the amount, nor are we furnished with the materials of anything like a graphical or picturesque exhibition of its abodes of blessedness. But still somewhat is made known, and which, too, may be addressed to a higher principle than curiosity, being, like every other Scripture, "profitable both for doctrine and for instruction in righteousness."

In the text before us, there are two leading points of information which we should like successively to remark upon. The first is, that in the new economy which is to be reared for the accommodation of the blessed, there will be materialism, not merely new heavens, but also a new earth. The second is, that as distinguished from the present, which is an abode of rebellion, it will be an abode of righteousness.

I.—We know historically that earth, that a solid material earth, may form the dwelling of sinless creatures in full converse and friendship with the Being who made them—that instead of a place of exile for outcasts, it may have a broad avenue of communication with the spiritual world for the descent of ethereal beings from on high—that like the member of an extended family, it may share in the regard and attention of the other members, and along with them be gladdened by the presence of Him who is the Father of them all. To inquire how this can be, were to attempt a wisdom beyond Scripture: but to assert that this has been, and therefore may be, is to keep most strictly and modestly within the limits of the record. For we there read, that God framed an apparatus of materialism, which, on His own surveying, He pronounced to be all very good, and the leading features of which may still be recognised among the things and the substances that are around us—and that He created man with the bodily organs and senses which we now wear—and placed him under the very canopy that is over our heads—and spread around him a scenery, perhaps lovelier in its tints, and more smiling and serene in the whole aspect of it, but certainly made up in the main of the same objects that still compose the prospect of our visible contemplations—and there, working with his hands in a garden, and with trees on every side of him, and even with animals sporting at his feet, was this inhabitant of earth, in the midst of all those earthly and familiar accompaniments, in full possession of the best immunities of a citizen of heaven—sharing in the delight of angels, and while he gazed on the very beauties which we ourselves gaze upon, rejoicing in them most as the tokens of a present and presiding Deity. It were venturing on the region of conjecture to affirm, whether, if Adam had not fallen, the earth that we now tread upon, would have been the everlasting abode of him and his posterity. But certain it is, that man, at the first, had for his place this world, and at the same time, for his privilege, an unclouded fellowship with God, and for his prospect, an immortality which death was neither to intercept nor put an end to. He was terrestrial in respect of condition, and yet celestial in respect both of character and enjoyment. His eye looked outwardly on a landscape of earth, while his heart breathed upwardly in the love of heaven. And though he trod the solid platform of our world, and was compassed about with its horizon—still was he within the circle of God's favoured creation, and took his place

among the freemen and the denizens of the great spiritual commonwealth.

This may serve to rectify an imagination, of which we think that all must be conscious—as if the grossness of materialism was only for those who had degenerated into the grossness of sin; and that, when a spiritualizing process had purged away all our corruption, then by the stepping-stones of a death and a resurrection, we should be borne away to some ethereal region, where sense, and body, and all in the shape either of audible sound or of tangible substance, were unknown. And hence that strangeness of impression which is felt by you, should the supposition be offered, that in the place of eternal blessedness, there will be ground to walk upon; or scenes of luxuriance to delight the corporeal senses; or the kindly intercourse of friends talking familiarly and by articulate converse together; or, in short, anything that has the least resemblance to a local territory, filled with various accommodations, and peopled over its whole extent by creatures formed like ourselves—having bodies such as we now wear, and faculties of perception, and thought, and mutual communication, such as we now exercise. The common imagination that we have of paradise on the other side of death, is, that of a lofty aerial region, where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing—where all the warm and sensible accompaniments which give such an expression of strength, and life, and colouring to our present habitation, are attenuated into a sort of spiritual element, that is meagre, and imperceptible, and utterly uninviting to the eye of mortals here below—where every vestige of materialism is done away, and nothing left but certain unearthly scenes that have no power of allurement, and certain unearthly ecstasies, with which it is felt impossible to sympathize. The holders of this imagination forget all the while, that really there is no essential connexion between materialism and sin—that the world which we now inhabit had all the amplitude and solidity of its present materialism before sin entered into it—that God, so far on that account from looking slightly upon it, after it had received the last touch of His creating hand, reviewed the earth, and the waters, and the firmament, and all the green herbage, with the living creatures, and the man whom He had raised in dominion over them, and He saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was all very good. They forget that on the birth of materialism, when it stood out in the freshness of those glories which the

great Architect of Nature had impressed upon it, that then "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." They forget the appeals that are made everywhere in the Bible to this material workmanship—and how from the face of these visible heavens, and the garniture of this earth that we tread upon, the greatness and the goodness of God are reflected on the view of His worshippers. No, my brethren, the object of the administration we sit under, is to extirpate sin, but it is not to sweep away materialism. By the convulsions of the last day, it may be shaken and broken down from its present arrangements, and thrown into such fitful agitations, as that the whole of its existing framework shall fall to pieces; and with a heat so fervent as to melt its most solid elements, may it be utterly dissolved. And thus may the earth again become without form and void, but without one particle of its substance going into annihilation. Out of the ruins of this second chaos, may another heaven and another earth be made to arise; and a new materialism, with other aspects of magnificence and beauty, emerge from the wreck of this mighty transformation; and the world be peopled as before, with the varieties of material loveliness, and space be again lighted up into a firmament of material splendour.

Were our place of everlasting blessedness so purely spiritual as it is commonly imagined, then the soul of man, after, at death, having quitted his body, would quit it conclusively. That mass of materialism with which it is associated upon earth, and which many regard as a load and an incumbrance, would have leave to putrefy in the grave, without being revisited by supernatural power, or raised again out of the inanimate dust into which it had resolved. If the body be indeed a clog and a confinement to the spirit instead of its commodious tenement, then would the spirit feel lightened by the departure it had made, and expatiate in all the buoyancy of its emancipated powers over a scene of enlargement. And this is, doubtless, the prevailing imagination. But why then, after having made its escape from such a thralldom, should it ever recur to the prison-house of its old materialism, if a prison-house it really be? Why should the disengaged spirit again be fastened to the drag of that grosser and heavier substance, which many think has only the effect of weighing down its activity, and infusing into the pure element of mind an ingredient which serves to cloud and to enfeeble it? In other words, what is the use of a day of resurrection, if the union which



then takes place is to deaden or to reduce all those energies that are commonly ascribed to the living principle, in a state of separation? But, as a proof of some metaphysical delusion upon this subject, the product, perhaps, of a wrong though fashionable philosophy, it would appear, that to embody the spirit is not the stepping-stone to its degradation, but to its preferment. The last day will be a day of triumph to the righteous—because the day of the re-entrance of the spirit to its much-loved abode, where its faculties, so far from being shut up into captivity, will find their free and kindred development in such material organs as are suited to them. The fact of the resurrection proves that, with man at least, the state of a disembodied spirit is a state of unnatural violence—and that the resurrection of his body is an essential step to the highest perfection of which he is susceptible. And it is indeed an homage to that materialism, which many are for expunging from the future state of the universe altogether—that ere the immaterial soul of man has reached the ultimate glory and blessedness which are designed for it, it must return and knock at that very grave where lie the mouldered remains of the body which it wore—and there inquisition must be made for the flesh, and the sinews, and the bones, which the power of corruption has perhaps for centuries before assimilated to the earth that is around them—and there the minute atoms must be re-assembled into a structure that bears upon it the form and the lineaments and the general aspect of a man—and the soul passes into this material framework, which is hereafter to be its lodging-place for ever—and that, not as its prison, but as its pleasant and befitting habitation—not to be trammelled, as some would have it, in a hold of materialism, but to be therein equipped for the services of eternity—to walk embodied among the bowers of our second paradise—to stand embodied in the presence of our God.

There will, it is true, be a change of personal constitution between a good man before his death, and a good man after his resurrection—not, however, that he will be set free from his body, but that he will be set free from the corrupt principle which is in his body—not that the materialism by which he is now surrounded will be done away, but that the taint of evil by which this materialism is now pervaded, will be done away. Could this be effected without dying, then death would be no longer an essential stepping-stone to paradise. But it would appear of the moral virus which has been transmitted downwards from Adam, and is now spread abroad over the whole human family—it would

appear that to get rid of this, the old fabric must be taken down and reared anew; and that not of other materials, but of its own materials, only delivered of all impurity, as if by a refining process in the sepulchre. It is thus, that what is "sown in weakness, is raised in power"—and for this purpose, it is not necessary to get quit of materialism, but to get quit of sin, and so to purge materialism of its malady. It is thus that the dead shall come forth incorruptible—and those, we are told, who are alive at this great catastrophe, shall suddenly and mysteriously be changed. While we are compassed about with these vile bodies, as the apostle emphatically terms them, evil is present, and it is well, if, through the working of the Spirit of grace, evil does not prevail. To keep this besetting enemy in check is the task and the trial of our Christianity on earth—and it is the detaching of this poisonous ingredient which constitutes that for which the believer is represented as groaning earnestly, even the redemption of the body that he now wears, and which will then be transformed into the likeness of Christ's glorified body. And this will be his heaven, that he will serve God without a struggle, and in a full gale of spiritual delight—because with the full concurrence of all the feelings and all the faculties of his regenerated nature. Before death, sin is only repressed—after the resurrection, sin will be exterminated. Here he has to maintain the combat with a tendency to evil still lodging in his heart, and working a perverse movement among his inclinations; but after his warfare in this world is accomplished, he will no longer be so thwarted—and he will set him down in another world, with the repose and the triumph of victory for his everlasting reward. The great constitutional plague of his nature will no longer trouble him; and there will be the charm of a general affinity between the purity of his heart and the purity of the element he breathes in. Still it will not be the purity of spirit escaped from materialism, but of spirit translated into a materialism that has been clarified of evil. It will not be the purity of souls unclothed as at death, but the purity of souls that have again been clothed upon at the resurrection.

But the highest homage that we know of to materialism, is that which God manifest in the flesh has rendered to it. That He, the Divinity, should have wrapt His unfathomable essence in one of its coverings, and expatiated amongst us in the palpable form and structure of a man; and that He should have chosen such a tenement, not as a temporary abode, but should have borne

it with Him to the place which He now occupies, and where He is now employed in preparing the mansions of His followers—that He should have entered within the veil, and be now seated at the right hand of the Father, with the very body which was marked by the nails upon His cross, and wherewith He ate and drank after His resurrection—that He who repelled the imagination of His disciples, as if they had seen a spirit, by bidding them handle Him and see, and subjecting to their familiar touch the flesh and the bones that encompassed Him; that He should now be throned in universal supremacy, and wielding the whole power of heaven and earth, have every knee to bow at His name, and every tongue to confess, and yet all to the glory of God the Father—that humanity, that substantial and embodied humanity, should thus be exalted, and a voice of adoration from every creature be lifted up to the Lamb for ever and ever—does this look like the abolition of materialism, after the present system of it is destroyed; or does it not rather prove, that transplanted into another system, it will be preferred to celestial honours, and prolonged in immortality throughout all ages?

It has been our careful endeavour in all that we have said, to keep within the limits of the record, and to offer no other remarks than those which may fitly be suggested by the circumstance, that a new earth is to be created, as well as a new heavens, for the future accommodation of the righteous. We have no desire to push the speculation beyond what is written—but it were, at the same time, well, that in all our representations of the immortal state, there was just the same force of colouring, and the same vivacity of scenic exhibition, that there is in the New Testament. The imagination of a total and diametric opposition between the region of sense and the region of spirituality, certainly tends to abate the interest with which we might otherwise look to the perspective that is on the other side of the grave; and to deaden all those sympathies that we else might have with the joys and the exercises of the blest in paradise. To rectify this, it is not necessary to enter on the particularities of heaven—a topic on which the Bible is certainly most sparing and reserved in its communications. But a great step is gained, simply by dissolving the alliance that exists in the minds of many between the two ideas of sin and materialism; or proving, that when once sin is done away, it consists with all we know of God's administration, that materialism shall be perpetuated in the full bloom and vigour of immortality. It altogether holds out a

warmer and more alluring picture of the elysium that awaits us, when told that there will be beauty to delight the eye, and music to regale the ear, and the comfort that springs from all the charities of intercourse between man and man, holding converse as they do on earth and gladdening each other with the benignant smiles that play on the human countenance, or the accents of kindness that fall in soft and soothing melody from the human voice. There is much of the innocent, and much of the inspiring, and much to affect and elevate the heart, in the scenes and the contemplations of materialism—and we do hail the information of our text, that after the dissolution of its present framework, it will again be varied and decked out anew in all the graces of its unfading verdure and of its unbounded variety—that in addition to our direct and personal view of the Deity, when He comes down to tabernacle with men, we shall also have the reflection of Him in a lovely mirror of His own workmanship—and that instead of being transported to some abode of dimness and of mystery, so remote from human experience as to be beyond all comprehension, we shall walk for ever in a land replenished with those sensible delights and those sensible glories, which, we doubt not, will lie most profusely scattered over the “new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

II.—But though a paradise of sense, it will not be a paradise of sensuality. Though not so unlike the present world as many apprehend it, there will be one point of total dissimilarity betwixt them. It is not the entire substitution of spirit for matter that will distinguish the future economy from the present. But it will be the entire substitution of righteousness for sin. It is this which signalizes the Christian from the Mahometan paradise; not that sense, and substance, and splendid imagery, and the glories of a visible creation seen with bodily eyes are excluded from it—but that all which is vile in principle or voluptuous in impurity will be utterly excluded from it. There will be a firm earth as we have at present, and a heaven stretched over it as we have at present; and it is not by the absence of these, but by the absence of sin, that the abodes of immortality will be characterized. There will both be heavens and earth, it would appear, in the next great administration—and with this specialty to mark it from the present one, that it will be a heavens and an earth “wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

Now, though the first topic of information that we educed

from the text, may be regarded as not very practical, yet the second topic on which we now insist, is most eminently so. Were it the great characteristic of that spirituality which is to obtain in a future heaven, that it was a spirituality of essence then occupying and pervading the place from which materialism had been swept away, we could not, by any possible method, approximate the condition we are in at present to the condition we are to hold everlastingly. We cannot etherealize the matter that is around us—neither can we attenuate our own bodies, nor bring down the slightest degree of such a heaven to the earth that we now inhabit. But when we are told that materialism is to be kept up, and that the spirituality of our future state lies not in the kind of substance which is to compose its framework, but in the character of those who people it—this puts, if not the fulness of heaven, at least a foretaste of heaven, within our reach. We have not to strain at a thing so impracticable as that of diluting the material economy which is without us—we have only to reform the moral economy that is within us. We are now walking on a terrestrial surface, not more compact, perhaps, than the one we shall hereafter walk upon, and are now wearing terrestrial bodies, not firmer and more solid, perhaps, than those we shall hereafter wear. It is not by working any change upon them, that we could realize to any extent our future heaven. And this is simply done by opening the door of our heart for the influx of heaven's affections—by bringing the whole man, as made up of soul, and spirit, and body, under the presiding authority of heaven's principles.

This will make plain to you how it is that it could be said in the New Testament, that the "kingdom of heaven was at hand"—and how, in that book, its place is marked out, not by locally pointing to any quarter, and saying, Lo here, or lo there, but by the simple affirmation that the kingdom of heaven is within you—and how, in defining what it was that constituted the kingdom of heaven, there is an enumeration, not of such circumstances as make up an outward condition, but of such feelings and qualities as make up a character, even righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost—and how the ushering in of the new dispensation is held equivalent to the introduction of this kingdom into the world—all making it evident, that if the purity and the principles of heaven begin to take effect upon our heart, what is essentially heaven begins with us even in this world; that instead of ascending to some upper region for the purpose of entering it, it may descend upon us, and make an actual entrance

of itself into our bosoms; and that so far, therefore, from that remote and inaccessible thing which many do regard it, it may, through the influence of the word which is nigh unto you, and of the Spirit that is given to prayer, be lighted up in the inner man of an individual upon earth, whose person may even here exemplify its graces, and whose soul may even here realize a measure of its enjoyments.

And hence one great purpose of the incarnation of our Saviour. He came down amongst us in the full perfection of heaven's character, and has made us see that it is a character which may be embodied. All its virtues were, in His case, infused into a corporeal framework, and the substance of these lower regions was taken into intimate and abiding association with the spirit of the higher. The ingredient which is heavenly, admits of being united with the ingredient which is earthly—so that we, who by nature are of the earth, and earthly, could we catch of that pure and celestial element which made the man Christ Jesus to differ from all other men, then might we too be formed into that character, by which it is that the members of the family above differ from those of the outcast family beneath. Now, it is expressly said of Him, that He is set before us as an example; and we are required to look to that living exhibition of Him, where all the graces of the upper sanctuary are beheld as in a picture; and instead of an abstract, we have in His history a familiar representation of such worth, and piety, and excellence, as, could they only be stamped upon our own persons, and borne along with us to the place where He now dwelleth—instead of being shunned as aliens, we should be welcomed and recognised as seemly companions for the inmates of that place of holiness. And, in truth, the great work of Christ's disciples upon earth, is a constant and busy process of assimilation to their Master who is in heaven. And we live under a special economy that has been set up for the express purpose of helping it forward. It is for this, in particular, that the Spirit is provided. We are changed into the image of the Lord, even by the Spirit of the Lord. Nursed out of this fullness, we grow up unto the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus—and instead of heaven being a remote and mysterious unknown, heaven is brought near to us by the simple expedient of inspiring us where we now stand, with its love and its purity and its sacredness. We learn from Christ, that the heavenly graces are all of them compatible with the wear of an earthly body, and the circumstances of an earthly habitation. It is not

said in how many of its features the new earth will differ from or be like unto the present one—but we, by turning from our iniquities unto Christ, push forward the resemblance of the one to the other, in the only feature that is specified, even that “therein dwelleth righteousness.”

And had we only the character of heaven, we should not be long of feeling what that is which essentially makes the comfort of heaven. “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Let us but love the righteousness which He loves, and hate the iniquity which He hateth; and this, of itself, would so soften and attune the mechanism of our moral nature, that in all the movements of it there should be joy. It is not sufficiently adverted to, that the happiness of heaven lies simply and essentially in the well-going machinery of a well-conditioned soul—and that according to its measure, it is the same in kind with the happiness of God, who liveth for ever in bliss ineffable, because He is unchangeable in being good and upright and holy. There may be audible music in heaven, but its chief delight will be in the music of well-poised affections, and of principles in full and consenting harmony with the laws of eternal rectitude. There may be visions of loveliness there; but it will be the loveliness of virtue, as seen directly in God, and as reflected back again in family likeness from all His children—it will be this that shall give its purest and sweetest transports to the soul. In a word, the main reward of paradise is spiritual joy, and that springing at once from the love and the possession of spiritual excellence. It is such a joy as sin extinguishes on the moment of its entering the soul; and such a joy as is again restored to the soul, and that immediately on its being restored to righteousness.

It is thus that heaven may be established upon earth, and the petition of our Lord’s prayer be fulfilled, “Thy kingdom come.” This petition receives its best explanation from the one which follows: “Thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven.” It just requires a similarity of habit and character in the two places, to make out a similarity of enjoyment. Let us attend, then, to the way in which the services of the upper sanctuary are rendered—not in the spirit of legality, for this gendereth to bondage; but in the spirit of love, which gendereth to the beatitude of the affections, rejoicing in their best and most favourite indulgence. They do not work there for the purpose of making out the conditions of a bargain. They do not act

agreeably to the pleasure of God, in order to obtain the gratification of any distinct will or distinct pleasure of their own in return for it. Their will is, in fact, identical with the will of God. There is a perfect unison of taste and of inclination between the creature and the Creator. They are in their element when they are feeling righteously and doing righteously. Obedience is not drudgery but delight to them ; and as much as there is of the congenial between animal nature and the food that is suitable to it, so much is there of the congenial between the moral nature of heaven and its sacred employments and services. Let the will of God, then, be done here as it is done there, and not only will character and conduct be the same here as there, but they will also resemble each other in the style though not in the degree of their blessedness. The happiness of heaven will be exemplified upon earth along with the virtue of heaven—for, in truth, the main ingredient of that happiness is not given them in payment for work ; but it lies in the love they bear to the work itself. A man is never happier than when employed in that which he likes best. This is all a question of taste : but should such a taste be given as to make it a man's meat and drink to do the will of his Father, then is he in perfect readiness for being carried upwards to heaven, and placed beside the pure river of water of life that proceedeth out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. This is the way in which you may make a heaven upon earth, not by heaping your reluctant offers at the shrine of legality, but by serving God because you love Him ; and doing His will, because you delight to do Him honour.

And here we may remark, that the only possible conveyance for this new principle into the heart, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ—that in no other way than through the acceptance of its free pardon, sealed by the blood of an atonement, which exalts the Lawgiver, can the soul of man be both emancipated from the fear of terror, and solemnized into the fear of humble and holy reverence—that it is only in conjunction with the faith that justifies, that the love of gratitude and the love of moral esteem are made to arise in the bosom of regenerated man ; and, therefore, to bring down the virtues of heaven, as well as the peace of heaven, into this lower world, we know not what else can be done, than to urge upon you the great propitiation of the New Testament—nor are we aware of any expedient by which all the cold and freezing sensations of legality can be done away, but by your thankful and unconditional acceptance of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.



## DISCOURSE V.

## THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

“For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.”—1 CORINTHIANS iv. 20.

THERE is a most important lesson to be derived from the variety of senses in which the phrases “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” are evidently made use of in the New Testament. If it at one time carry our thoughts to that place where God sits in visible glory, and where, surrounded by the family of the blessed, He presides in full and spiritual authority—it at another time turns our thoughts inwardly upon ourselves, and instead of leading us to say, Lo here, or lo there, as if to some local habitation at a distance, it leads us, by the declaration that the “kingdom of God is within us,” to look for it into our own breast, and to examine whether heavenly affections have been substituted there in the place of earthly ones. Such is the tendency of our imagination upon this subject, that the kingdom of heaven is never mentioned without our minds being impelled thereby to take an upward direction—to go aloft to that place of spaciousness, and of splendour, and of psalmody, which forms the residence of angels; and where the praises both of redeemed and unfallen creatures rise in one anthem of gratulation to the Father, who rejoices over them all. Now, it is evident, that in dwelling upon such an elysium as this, the mind can picture to itself a thousand delicious accompaniments, which, apart from moral and spiritual character altogether, are fitted to regale animal and sensitive and unrenewed man. There may be sights of beauty and brilliancy for the eye. There may be sounds of sweetest melody for the ear. There may be innumerable sensations of delight, from the adaptation which obtains between the materialism of surrounding heaven, and the materialism of our own transformed and glorified bodies. There may even be poured upon us, in richest abundance, a higher and a nobler class of enjoyments—and separate still from the possession of

holiness, of that peculiar quality, by the accession of which a sinner is turned into a saint, and the man who before had an entire aspect of secularity and of the world, looks as if he had been cast over again in another mould, and come out breathing godly desires, and aspiring, with a newly-created fervour after godly enjoyments. And so, without any such conversion as this, heaven may still be conceived to minister a set of very refined and intellectual gratifications. One may figure it so formed as to adapt itself to the senses of man, though he should possess not one single virtue of the temple or of the sanctuary—and one may figure it to be so formed, as, though alike destitute of these virtues, to adapt itself even to the spirit of man, and to many of the loftier principles and capacities of his nature. His taste may find an ever-recurring delight in the panorama of its sensible glories; and his fancy wander untired among all the realities and all the possibilities of created excellence; and his understanding be feasted to ecstasy among those endless varieties of truth which are ever pouring in a rich flood of discovery upon his mind; and even his heart be kept in a glow of warm and kindly affection among the cordialities of that benevolence by which he is surrounded. All this is possible to be conceived of heaven—and when we add its secure and everlasting exemption from the agonies of hell, let us not wonder that such a heaven should be vehemently desired by those who have not advanced by the very humblest degree of spiritual preparation for the real heaven of the New Testament—who have not the least congeniality of feeling with that which forms its essential and characteristic blessedness—who cannot sustain on earth for a very short interval of retirement, the labour and the weariness of communion with God—who, though they could relish to the uttermost all the sensible and all the intellectual joys of heaven, yet hold no taste of sympathy whatever with its hallelujahs and its songs of raptured adoration—and who, therefore, if transported at this moment, or if transported after death, with the frame and character of soul that they have at this moment, to the New Jerusalem, and the city of the living God, would positively find themselves aliens, and out of their kindred and rejoicing element, however much they may sigh after a paradise of pleasure or a paradise of poetry.

It may go to dissipate this sentimental illusion, if we ponder well the meaning which is often assigned to the "kingdom of heaven" in the Bible—if we reflect, that it is often made to attach

personally to a human creature upon earth—as well as to be situated locally in some distant and mysterious region away from us—that to be the subjects of such a kingdom, it is not indispensable that our residence be within the limits of an assigned territory, any more, in fact, than that the subject of an earthly sovereign should not remain so, though travelling, for a time, beyond the confines of his master's jurisdiction. He may, though away from his country in person, carry about with him in mind a full principle of allegiance to his country's sovereign—and may both, in respect of legal duty, and of his own most willing and affectionate compliance with it, remain associated with him both in heart and in political relationship. He is still a member of that kingdom in the domains of which he was born—and in the very same way may a man be travelling the journey of life in this world, and be all the while a member of the kingdom of heaven. The Being who reigns in supreme authority there, may, even in this land of exile and alienation, have some one devoted subject who renders to the same authority the deference of his heart and the subordination of his whole practice. The will of God may possess such a moral ascendancy over his will, as that when the one commands, the other promptly and cheerfully obeys. The character of God may stand revealed in such charms of perfection and gracefulness to the eye of his mind, that by ever looking to Him, he both loves and is made like unto Him. A sense of God may pervade his every hour and every employment, even as it is the hand of God which preserves him continually, and through the actual power of God that he lives and moves as well as has his being. Such a man, if such a man there be on the face of our world, has the kingdom of God set up in his heart. He is already one of the children of the kingdom. He is not locally in heaven, and yet his heaven is begun. He has in his eye the glories of heaven; though as yet he sees them through a glass darkly. He feels in his bosom the principles of heaven; though still at war with the propensities of nature, they do not yet reign in all the freeness of an undisputed ascendancy. He carries in his heart the peace, and the joy, and the love, and the elevation of heaven; though under the incumbrance of a vile body, the spiritual repast which is thus provided, is not without its mixtures and without its mitigation. In a word, the essential elements of heaven's reward, and of heaven's felicity, are all in his possession. He tastes the happiness of heaven in kind, though not in its full and finished degree. When

he gets to heaven above, he will not meet there with a happiness differing in character from that which he now feels; but only higher in gradation. There may be crowns of material splendour. There may be trees of unfading loveliness. There may be pavements of emerald—and canopies of brightest radiance—and gardens of deep and tranquil security—and palaces of proud and stately decoration—and a city of lofty pinnacles, through which there unceasing flows a river of gladness, and where jubilee is ever rung with the concord of seraphic voices. But these are only the accessories of heaven. They form not the materials of its substantial blessedness. Of this the man who toils in humble drudgery an utter stranger to the delights of sensible pleasure, or the fascinations of sensible glory, has got already a foretaste in his heart. It consists not in the enjoyment of created good, nor in the survey of created magnificence. It is drawn in a direct stream through the channels of love and of contemplation from the fulness of the Creator. It emanates from the countenance of God, manifesting the spiritual glories of His holy and perfect character, on those whose characters are kindred to His own. And if on earth there is no tendency towards such a character—no process of restoration to the lost image of the Godhead—no delight in prayer—no relish for the sweets of intercourse with our Father, now unseen, but then to be revealed to the view of His immediate worshippers—then, let our imaginations kindle as they may with the beatitudes of our fictitious heaven, the true heaven of the Bible is what we shall never reach, because it is a heaven that we are not fitted to enjoy.

But such a view of the matter seems not merely to dissipate a sentimental illusion which obtains upon this subject. It also serves to dissipate a theological illusion. Ere we can enter heaven, there must be granted to us a legal capacity of admission—and Christ by His atoning death and perfect righteousness has purchased this capacity for those who believe—and they, by the very act of believing, are held to be in possession of it, just as a man by stretching out his hand to a deed or a passport, becomes vested with all the privileges which are thereby conveyed to the holder. Now, in the zeal of controversialists (and it is a point most assuredly about which they cannot be too zealous)—in their zeal to clear up and to demonstrate the ground on which the sinner's legal capacity must rest—there has, with many, been a sad overlooking of what is no less indispensable, even his personal capacity. And yet even on the lowest and

grossest conceptions of what that is which constitutes the felicity of heaven, it would be no heaven, and no place of enjoyment at all, without a personal adaptation on the part of its occupiers to the kind of happiness which is current there. If that happiness consisted entirely in sights of magnificence, of what use would it be to confer a title-deed of entry on a man who was blind? To make it heaven to him, his eyes must be opened. Or, if that happiness consisted in sounds of melody, of what use would a passport be to the man who was deaf? To make out a heaven for him, a change must be made on the person which he wears, as well as in the place which he occupies—and his ears must be unstopped. Or, if that happiness consisted in fresh and perpetual accessions of new and delightful truth to the understanding, what would rights and legal privileges avail to him who was sunk in helpless idiotism? To provide him with a heaven, it is not enough that he be transported to a place among the mansions of the celestial: he must be provided with a new faculty—and as before, a change behoved to be made upon the senses; so now, ere heaven can be heaven to its occupier, a change must be made upon his mind. And, in like manner, my brethren, if that happiness shall consist in the love of God for His goodness, and in the love of God for the moral and spiritual excellence which belongs to Him—if it shall consist in the play and exercise of affections directed to such objects as are alone worthy of their most exalted regard—if it shall consist in the movements of a heart now attracted in reverence and admiration towards all that is noble and righteous and holy—it is not enough to constitute a heaven for the sinner, that God is there in visible manifestation, or that heaven is lighted up to him in a blaze of spiritual glory. His heart must be made a fit recipient for the impression of that glory. Of what possible enjoyment to him is heaven, as his purchased inheritance, if heaven be not also his precious and his much-loved home? To create enjoyment for a man, there must be a suitableness between the taste that is in him and the objects that are around him. To make a natural man happy upon earth, we may let his taste alone, and surround him with favourable circumstances—with smiling abundance, and merry companionship, and bright anticipations of fortune or of fame, and the salutations of public respect, and the gaieties of fashionable amusement, and the countless other pleasures of a world which yields so much to delight and to diversify the short-lived period of its fleeting generations. To make the same man happy

in heaven, it would suffice simply to transmit him there with the same taste, and to surround him with the same circumstances. But God has not so ordered heaven. He will not suit the circumstances of heaven to the character of man—and therefore to make it, that man can be happy there, nothing remains but to suit the character of man to the circumstances of heaven—and therefore it is, that to bring about heaven to a sinner, it is not enough that there be the preparation of a place for him, there must be a preparation of him for the place; it is not enough that he be meet in law, he must be meet in person; it is not enough that there be a change in his forensic relation towards God, there must be a change in the actual disposition of his heart towards Him; and unless delivered from his earth-born propensities; unless a clean heart be created, and a right spirit be renewed; unless transformed into a holy and a godlike character, it is quite in vain to have put a deed of entry into his hands—heaven will have no charm for him; all its notes of rapture will fall with tasteless insipidity upon his ear; and justification itself will cease to be a privilege.

Let us cease to wonder, then, at the frequent application, in Scripture, of this phrase to a state of personal feeling and character upon earth—and rather let us press upon our remembrance the important lessons which are to be gathered from such an application. In that passage where it is said, that “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” there can be no doubt that the reference is altogether personal, for the apostle is here contrasting the man who in these things serveth Christ, with the man who eateth unto the Lord, or who eateth not unto the Lord. And in the passage now before us, there can be as little doubt that the reference is to the kingdom of God, as fixed and substantiated upon the character of the human soul. He was just before alluding to those who could talk of the things of Christ, while it remained questionable whether there was any change or any effect that could at all attest the power of these things upon their person and character. This is the point which he proposed to ascertain on his next visit to them. “I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” It is not enough to mark you as the children of this kingdom; or as those over whose hearts the reign of God is established; or as those in whom a

preparation is going on here for a place of glory and blessedness hereafter—that you know the terms of orthodoxy, or that you can speak its language. If even an actual belief in its doctrine could reside in your mind, without fruit and without influence, this would as little avail you. But it is well to know, both from experience and from the information of Him who knew what was in man, that an actual belief of the gospel is at all times an effectual belief—that upon the entrance of such a belief the kingdom of God comes to us with power, being that which availeth, even faith working by love, and purifying the heart, and overcoming the world.

One of the simplest cases of the kingdom of God in word and not in power is that of a child with its memory stored in passages of Scripture, and in all the answers to all the questions of a substantial and well-digested catechism. In such an instance, the tongue may be able to rehearse the whole expression of evangelical truth, while neither the meaning of the truth is perceived by the understanding, nor, of consequence, can the moral influence of the truth be felt in the heart. The learner has got words, but nothing more. This is the whole fruit of his acquisition—nor would it make any difference in as far as the effect at the time is concerned, though, instead of words adapted to the expression of Christian doctrine, they had been the words of a song, or a fable, or any secular narrative and performance whatever. This is all undeniable enough—if we could only prevail on many men and many women not to deny its application to themselves—if we could only convince our grown-up children of the absolute futility of many of their exercises—if we could only arouse from their dormancy our listless readers of the Bible—our men who make a mere piece-work of their Christianity; who, in making way through the Scriptures, do it by the page, and in addressing prayers to their Maker, do it by the sentence; with whom the perusal of the sacred volume is absolutely little better than a mere exercise of the lip or of the eye, and a preference for orthodoxy is little better than a preference for certain familiar and well-known sounds; where the thinking principle is almost never in contact with the matter of theological truth, however conversant both their mouths and their memories may be with the language of it—so that, in fact, the doctrine by the knowledge of which, and the power of which, it is that we are saved, lies as effectually hidden from their minds, as if it lay wrapt in hieroglyphical obscurity; or as if their intellectual

organ was shut against all communication with anything without them—and thus it is, that what is not perceived by the mental eye, having no possible operation upon the mental feelings or mental purposes, the kingdom of God cometh to them in word only, while not in power.

But again, what is translated “word” in this verse, is also capable of being rendered by the term “reason.” It may not only denote that which constitutes the material vehicle by which the argument conceived in the mind of one man is translated into the mind of another—it may also denote the argument itself; and when rendered in this way, it offers to our notice a very interesting case of which there are not wanting many exemplifications. In the case just now adverted to, the mere word is in the mouth, without its corresponding idea being in the mind; but in the case immediately before us, ideas are present as well as words, and every intellectual faculty is at its post for the purpose of entertaining them—the attention most thoroughly awake—and the curiosity on the stretch of its utmost eagerness—and the judgment most busily employed in the work of comparing one doctrine and one declaration with another—and the reason conducting its long or its intricate processes—and, in a word, the whole machinery of the mind as powerfully stimulated by a theological as it ever can be by a natural or scientific speculation—and yet with this seeming advancement that it makes from the language of Christianity to the substance of Christianity, what shall we think of it if there be no advancement whatever in the power of Christianity—no accession to the soul of any one of those three ingredients, which, taken together, make up the apostle’s definition of the kingdom of God—no augmentation either of its righteousness or its peace or its joy in the Holy Ghost—the man, no doubt, very much engrossed and exercised with the subject of divinity, but with as little of the real spirit and character of divinity thereby transferred into his own spirit and his own character as if he were equally engrossed and equally exercised with the subject of mathematics—remaining, in short, after all his doctrinal acquisitions of the truth, an utter stranger to the moral influence of the truth—and proving, in the fact of his being practically and personally the very same man as before, that if the kingdom of God is not in word, it is as little in argument, but in power.

If it be of importance to know, that a man may lay hold by his memory of all the language of Christianity, and yet not be



a Christian—it is also of importance to know, that a man may lay hold by his understanding of all the doctrine of Christianity, and yet not be a Christian. It is our opinion that in this case the man has only an apparent belief without having an actual belief—that all the doctrine is conceived by him without being credited by him—that it is the object of his fancy without being the object of his faith—and that, as on the one hand, if the conviction be real, the consequence of another heart and another character will be sure—so on the other hand, and on the principle of “by their fruits shall ye know them,” if he want the fruit, it is just because he is in want of the foundation—if there be no produce, it is because there is no principle—having experienced no salvation from sin here, he shall experience no salvation from the abode of sinners hereafter. If faith were present with him, he would be kept by the power of it unto salvation, from both—but destitute as he proves himself to be now of the faith which sanctifies, he will be found then, in the midst of all his semblances and all his delusions, to have been equally destitute of the faith which justifies.

And it is perhaps not so difficult to stir up in the mind of the learned controversialist and the deeply-exercised scholar the suspicion, that with all his acquirements in the lore of theology, he is in respect of its personal influence upon himself, still in a state of moral and spiritual unsoundness—it is not so difficult to raise this feeling of self-condemnation in his mind, as it is to do it in the mind of him who has selected his one favourite article, and there resolved if die he must to die hard, has taken up his obstinate and immovable position—and retiring within the entrenchment of a few verses of the Bible, will defy all the truth and all the thunder of its remaining declarations; and with an orthodoxy which carries on all its play in his head without one moving or one softening touch upon his heart, will stand out to the eye of the world, both in avowed principle, and in its corresponding practice, a secure, sturdy, firm, impregnable Antinomian. He thinks that he will have heaven because he has faith. But if his faith do not bring the virtues of heaven into his heart, it will never spread either the glory or the security of heaven around his person. The region to which he vainly thinks of looking forward is a region of spirituality—and he himself must be spiritualized ere it can prove to him a region of enjoyment. If he count on a different paradise from this, he is as widely mistaken as they who dream of the luxury that awaits

them in the paradise of Mahomet. He misinterprets the whole undertaking of Jesus Christ. He degrades the salvation which He hath achieved, into a salvation from animal pain. He transforms the heaven which He has opened, into a heaven of animal gratifications. He forgets that on the great errand of man's restoration, it is not more necessary to recall our departed species to the heaven from which they had wandered, than it is to recall to the bosom of man its departed worth and its departed excellence. The one is what faith will do on the other side of death. But the other just as certainly faith must do on this side of death. It is here that heaven begins. It is here that eternal life is entered upon. It is here that man first breathes the air of immortality. It is upon earth that he learns the rudiments of a celestial character, and first tastes of celestial enjoyments. It is here that the well of water is struck out in the heart of renovated man, and that fruit is made to grow unto holiness, and then, in the end, there is life everlasting. The man whose threadbare orthodoxy is made up of meagre and unfruitful positions, may think that he walks in clearness, while he is only walking in the cold light of speculation. He walks in the feeble sparks of his own kindling. Were it fire from the sanctuary, it would impart to his unregenerated bosom of the heat, and spirit, and love of the sanctuary. This is the sure result of the faith that is unfeigned—and all that a feigned faith can possibly make out, will be a fictitious title-deed, which will not stand before the light of the great day of final examination. And thus will it be found, I fear, in many cases of marked and ostentatious professorship, how possible a thing it is to have an appearance of the kingdom of God in word, and the kingdom of God in letter, and the kingdom of God in controversy—while the kingdom of God is not in power.

But once more: Instead of laying a false security upon one article, it is possible to have a mind familiarized to all the articles—to admit the need of holiness, and to demonstrate the channel of influence by which it is brought down from heaven upon the hearts of believers—to cast an eye of intelligence over the whole symphony and extent of Christian doctrine—to lay bare those ligaments of connexion by which a true faith in the mind is ever sure to bring a new spirit and a new practice along with it—and to hold up the lights both of Scripture and of experience over the whole process of man's regeneration. It is possible for one to do all this, and yet to have no part in that

regeneration—to declare with ability and effect the gospel to others, and yet himself be a castaway—to unravel the whole of that spiritual mechanism by which a sinner is transformed into a saint, while he does not exemplify the working of that mechanism in his own person—to explain what must be done, and what must be undergone in the process of becoming one of the children of the kingdom, while he himself remains one of the children of this world. To him the kingdom of God hath come in word, and it hath come in letter, and it hath come in natural discernment; but it hath not come in power. He may have profoundly studied the whole doctrine of the kingdom, and have conceived the various ideas of which it is composed, and have embodied them in words, and have poured them forth in utterance—and yet be as little spiritualized by these manifold operations, as the air is spiritualized by its being the avenue for the sounds of his voice to the ears of his listening auditory. The living man may with all the force of his active intelligence be a mere vehicle of transmission. The Holy Ghost may leave the message to take its own way through his mind—and may refuse the accession of His influence, till it make its escape from the lips of the preacher—and may trust for its conveyance to those aerial undulations by which the report is carried forward to an assembled multitude—and may only, after the entrance of hearing has been effected for the terms of the message, may only, after the unaided powers of moral and physical nature have brought the matter thus far, may then, and not till then, add His own influence to the truths of the message, and send them with this impregnation from the ear to the conscience of any whom He listeth. And thus from the workings of a cold and desolate bosom in the human expounder, may there proceed a voice, which on its way to some of those who are assembled around him, shall turn out to be a voice of urgency and power. He may be the instrument of blessings to others, which have never come with kindly or effective influence upon his own heart. He may inspire an energy which he does not feel, and pour a comfort into the wounded spirit, the taste of which and the enjoyment of which is not permitted to his own—and nothing can serve more effectually than this experimental fact to humble him, and to demonstrate the existence of a power which cannot be wielded by all the energies of Nature—a power often refused to eloquence, often refused to the might and the glory of human wisdom—often refused to the most strenuous exertions of

human might and human talent, and generally met with in richest abundance among the ministrations of the men of simplicity and prayer.

Some of you have heard of the individual who, under an oppression of the severest melancholy, implored relief and counsel from his physician. The unhappy patient was advised to attend the performances of a comedian who had put all the world into ecstasies. But it turned out that the patient was the comedian himself—and that while his smile was the signal of merriment to all, his heart stood uncheered and motionless, amid the congratulations of an applauding theatre; and evening after evening did he kindle around him a rapture in which he could not participate—a poor, helpless, dejected mourner, among the tumults of that high-sonnding gaiety which he himself had created.

Let all this touch our breasts with the persuasion of the nothingness of man. Let it lead us to withdraw our confidence from the mere instrument, and to carry it upwards to Him who alone worketh all in all. Let it reconcile us to the arrangements of His providence, and assure our minds that He can do with one arrangement what we fondly anticipated from another. Let us cease to be violently affected by the mutabilities of a fleeting and a shifting world—and let nothing be suffered to have the power of dissolving for an instant that connexion of trust which should ever subsist between our minds and the will of the all-working Deity. Above all, let us carefully separate between our liking for certain accompaniments of the word, and our liking for the word itself. Let us be jealous of those human preferences which may bespeak some human and adventitious influence upon our hearts, and be altogether different from the influence of Christian truth upon Christianized and sanctified affections. Let us be tenacious only of one thing—not of holding by particular ministers—not of saying, that “I am of Paul, or Cephas, or Apollos”—not of idolizing the servant while the Master is forgotten—but let us hold by the Head, even Christ. He is the source of all spiritual influence—and while the agents whom He employs can do no more than bring the kingdom of God to you in word—it lies with Him either to exalt one agency, or to humble and depress another—and either with or without such an agency, by the demonstration of that Spirit which is given unto faith, to make the kingdom of God come into your hearts with power.

## DISCOURSE VI.

## HEAVEN A CHARACTER AND NOT A LOCALITY.

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”—REV. xxii. 11.

OUR first remark on this passage of Scripture is, how very palpably and nearly it connects time with eternity. The character wherewith we sink into the grave at death, is the very character wherewith we shall re-appear on the day of resurrection. The character which habit has fixed and strengthened through life, adheres, it would seem, to the disembodied spirit through the mysterious interval which separates the day of our dissolution from the day of our account—when it will again stand forth the very image and substance of what it was, to the inspection of the Judge and the awards of the judgment-seat. The moral lineaments which be graven on the tablet of the inner man, and which every day of an unconverted life makes deeper and more indelible than before, will retain the very impress they have gotten—unaltered and uneffaced by the transition from our present to our future state of existence. There will be a dissolution, and then a reconstruction of the body from the sepulchral dust into which it had mouldered. But there will be neither a dissolution nor a renovation of the spirit, which, indestructible both in character and essence, will weather and retain its identity on the mid-way passage between this world and the next; so that at the time of quitting its earthly tenement we may say, that, if unjust now it will be unjust still, if filthy now it will be filthy still, if righteous now it will be righteous still, and if holy now it will be holy still.

Our second remark, suggested by the Scripture now under consideration, is, that there be many analogies of nature and experience which even death itself does not interrupt. There is nought more familiar to our daily observation than the power and inveteracy of habit—insomuch that any vicious propensity

is strengthened by every new act of indulgence; any virtuous principle is more firmly established than before by every new act of resolute obedience to its dictates. The law which connects the actings of boyhood or of youth with the character of manhood, is the identical the unrepealed law which connects our actings in time with our character through eternity. The way in which the moral discipline of youth prepares for the honours and the enjoyments of a virtuous manhood, is the very way in which the moral and spiritual discipline of a whole life prepares for a virtuous and happy immortality. And on the other hand, the succession, as of cause and effect, from a profligate youth or a dishonest manhood to a disgraced and worthless old age—is just the succession, also of cause and effect, between the misdeeds and the depravities of our history on earth, and an inheritance of worthlessness and wretchedness for ever. The law of moral continuity between the different stages of human life, is also the law of continuity between the two worlds—which even the death that intervenes does not violate. Be he a saint or a sinner, each shall be filled with the fruit of his own ways—so that when translated into their respective places of fixed and everlasting destination, the one shall rejoice through eternity in that pure element of goodness which here he loved and aspired after; the other, a helpless, a degraded victim of those passions which lorded over him through life, shall be irrevocably doomed to that worst of torments and that worst of tyranny—the torment of his own accursed nature, the inexorable tyranny of evil.

Our third remark, suggested by this Scripture, is, that it affords no very dubious perspective of the future heaven and the future hell of the New Testament. We are aware of the material images employed in Scripture, and by which it bodies forth its representation of both; of the fire, and the brimstone, and the lake of living agony, and the gnashing of teeth, and the wailings, the ceaseless wailings of distress and despair unutterable, by which the one is set before us in characters of terror and most revolting hideousness; of the splendour, the spaciousness, the music, the floods of melody and sights of surpassing loveliness, by which the other is set before us in characters of bliss and brightness unperishable; with all that can regale the glorified senses of creatures rejoicing for ever in the presence and before the throne of God. We stop not to inquire, and far less to dispute, whether these descriptions in the plain meaning and very letter of them are to be realized. But we hold that it would

purge theology from many of its errors, and that it would guide and enlighten the practical Christianity of many honest inquirers; if the moral character both of heaven and hell were more distinctly recognised, and held a more prominent place in the regards and contemplations of men. If it indeed be true that the moral, rather than the material, is the main ingredient, whether of the coming torment or the coming ecstasy—then the hell of the wicked may be said to have already begun, and the heaven of the virtuous may be said to have already begun. The one, in the bitterness of an unhinged and dissatisfied spirit, has a foretaste of the wretchedness before him; the other, in the peace and triumphant complacency of an approving conscience, has a foretaste of the happiness before him. Each is ripening for his own everlasting destiny; and whether in the depravities that deepen and accumulate on the character of the one, or in the graces that brighten and multiply upon the other—we see materials enough, either for the worm that dieth not, or for the pleasures that are for evermore.

But again, it may be asked, will spiritual elements alone suffice to make up either the intense and intolerable wretchedness of a hell, or the intense beatitude of a heaven? For an answer to this question, let us first turn your attention to the former of these receptacles. And we ask you to think of the state of that heart in respect to sensation, which is the seat of a concentrated and all-absorbing selfishness, which feels for no other interest than its own, and holds no fellowship of truth or honesty or confidence with the fellow-beings around it. The owner of such a heart may live in society; but, cut off as he is by his own sordid nature from the reciprocities of honourable feeling and good faith, he may be said to live an exile in the midst of it. He is a stranger to the day-light of the moral world; and instead of walking abroad on an open platform of free and fearless communion with his fellows, he spends a cold and heartless existence in the hiding-place of his own thoughts. You mistake it, if you think of this creeping and ignoble creature that he knows aught of the real truth or substance of enjoyment; or however successful he may have been in the wiles of his paltry selfishness, that a sincere or a solid satisfaction has been the result of it. On the contrary, if you enter his heart, you will there find a distaste and disquietude in the lurking sense of its own worthlessness; and that dis severed from the respect of society without, it finds no refuge within where he is aban-

done by the respect of his own conscience. It does not consist with moral nature, that there should be internal happiness or internal harmony, when the moral sense is made to suffer perpetual violence. A man of cunning and concealment, however dexterous, however triumphant in his worthless policy, is not at ease. The stoop, the downcast regards, the dark and sinister expression, of him who cannot lift up his head among his fellow-men, or look his companions in the face, are the sensible proofs that he who knows himself to be dishonest feels himself to be degraded; and the inward sense of dishonour which haunts and humbles him here, is but the commencement of that shame and everlasting contempt to which he shall awaken hereafter. This, you will observe, is a purely moral chastisement; and, apart altogether from the infliction of violence or pain on the sentient economy, is enough to overwhelm the spirit that is exercised thereby. Let him then that is unjust now be unjust still; and in stepping from time to eternity, he bears in his own distempered bosom the materials of his coming vengeance along with him. The character itself will be the executioner of its own condemnation; and when, instead of each suffering apart, the unrighteous are congregated together—as in the parable of the tares, where, instead of each plant being severally destroyed, the order is given to bind them up in bundles and burn them—we may be well assured, that, where the turbulence and disorder of an unrighteous society are superadded to those sufferings which prey in secrecy and solitude within the heart of each individual member, a tenfold fiercer and more intolerable agony will ensue from it. The anarchy of a state, when the authority of its government is for a time suspended, forms but a feeble representation of that everlasting anarchy when the unrighteous of all ages are let loose to act and react with unmitigated violence on each other. In this conflict of assembled myriads; this fierce and fell collision between the outrages of injustice on the one side, and the outcries of resentment on the other; and though no pain were inflicted in this war of passions and of purposes, the passion and purpose of violence in one quarter calling forth the passion and the purpose of keenest vengeance back again—though no material or sentient agony were felt—though a war of disembodied spirits—yet in the wild tempest of emotions alone—the hatred, the fury, the burning recollection of injured rights, and the brooding thoughts of yet unfulfilled retaliation—in these, and these alone, do we behold the materials enough of a dire and dreadful



pandemonium ; and apart from corporeal suffering altogether, may we behold, in the full and final developments of character alone, enough for imparting all its corrosion to the worm that dieth not, enough for sustaining in all its fierceness the fire that is not quenched.

But there is another moral ingredient in the future sufferings of the wicked beside the one of which we have now spoken—suggested to us by the second clause of our text ; and from which we learn, that not only will the unjust man carry his falsehoods and his frauds along with him to the place of condemnation, but that also the voluptuary will carry his unsanctified habits and unhallowed passions thitherward. “Let him that is filthy be filthy still.” We would here take the opportunity of exposing, what we fear is a frequent delusion in society—who give their respect to the man of honour and integrity—and he does not forfeit that respect, though known at the same time to be a man of dissipation. Not that *we* think any one of the virtues which enter into the composition of a perfect character can suffer without all the other virtues suffering along with it. We believe that a conjunction between a habit of unlawful pleasure and the maintenance of a strict resolute exalted equity and truth, is very seldom, we could almost say, is never realized. The man of forbidden indulgence in the prosecution of his objects has a thousand degrading fears to encounter, and many concealments to practise—perhaps low and unworthy artifices to which he must descend ; and how can either his honour or his humanity be said to survive, if at length, in his heedless and impetuous career, he shall trample on the dearest rights and the most sacred interests of families ? With us it has all the authority of a moral aphorism, that the sobrieties of human virtue can never be invaded without the equities of human virtue also being invaded. The moralities of human life are too closely linked and interwoven with each other, as that though one should be detached, the others might be left uninjured and entire ; and so no one can cast his purity away from him, without a violence being done to the general moral structure and consistency of his whole character. But be this as it may, we have the authority of the text, and the oft-reiterated affirmations of the New Testament, for saying of the voluptuary, that if the countenance of the world be not withdrawn from him, the gate of heaven is at least shut against him ; that nothing unclean or unholy can enter there ; and that carrying his uncrucified affections into the place of condemnation, he

will find them to be the ministers of wrath, the executioners of a still sorer vengeance. The loathing, the remorse, the felt and conscious degradation, the dreariness of heart that follow in the train of guilty indulgence here—these form but the beginning of his sorrows, and are but the presages and the precursors of that deeper wretchedness, which, by the unrepealed laws of moral nature, the same character will entail on its possessors in another state of existence. They are but the penalties of vice in embryo, and they may give at least the conception of what are these penalties in full. It will add—it will add inconceivably, to the darkness and disorder of that moral chaos in which the impenitent shall spend their eternity—when the uproar of the bacchanalian and the licentious emotions is thus superadded to the selfish and malignant passions of our nature; and when the frenzy of unsated desire, followed up by the languor and the compunction of its worthless indulgence, shall make up the sad history of many an unhappy spirit. We need not to dwell on the picture, though it brings out into bolder relief the all-important truth, that there is an inherent bitterness in sin; that by the very constitution of our nature, moral evil is its own curse and its own worst punishment; that the wicked on the other side of death, but reap what they sow on this side of it; and that whether we look to the tortures of a distempered spirit, or to the countless ills of a distempered society, we may be very sure that to the character of its inmates—a character which they have fostered upon earth, and which now remains fixed on them through eternity—the main wretchedness of hell is owing.

Before quitting this part of the subject, we have but one remark more to offer. It may be felt as if we had overstated the power of mere character to beget a wretchedness at all approaching to the wretchedness of hell—seeing that the character is often realized in this world, without bringing along with it a distress or a discomfort which is at all intolerable. Neither the unjust man of our text, nor the licentious man of our text, is seen to be so unhappy here, in virtue of the moral characteristics which respectively belong to them, as to justify the imagination that there these characteristics will be of power to effectuate such anguish and disorder of spirit as we have now been representing. But it is forgotten, first, that the world presents in its business, its amusements, and its various gratifications, a refuge from the mental agonies of reflection and remorse—and, secondly, that the governments of the world offer a restraint against the out-

breakings of violence which would keep up a perpetual anarchy in the species. Let us simply conceive of these two securities against our having even now a hell upon earth, that they are both taken down; that there is no longer such a world as ours, affording to each individual spirit innumerable diversions from the burden of its own thoughts; and no longer such a human government as ours, affording to general society a powerful defence against the countless variety of ills that would otherwise rage and tumultuate within its borders—then, as sure as that a solitary prison is felt by every criminal to be the most dreadful of all punishments; and as sure as that on the authority of law being suspended, the reign of terror would commence, and the unchained passions of humanity would go forth over the face of the land to raven and to destroy—so surely, out of moral elements and influences alone might an eternity of utter wretchedness and despair be entailed on the rebellious. And only let all the unjust and all the licentious of our text be formed into a community by themselves, and the Christianity which now acts as a purifying and preserving salt upon the earth be wholly removed from them; and then it will be seen that the picture has not been overcharged, but that the wretchedness is intense and universal, just because the wickedness reigns uncontrolled, without mixture and without mitigation.

But we now exchange this appalling for a delightful contemplation. The next clause of our text suggests to us the moral character of heaven. We learn from it, that on the universal principle, "as a tree falleth so it lies," the righteous now will be righteous still. We no more dispute the material accompaniments of heaven, than we dispute the material accompaniments in the place of condemnation. But still we must affirm of the happiness that reigns and holds unceasing jubilee there—that mainly and pre-eminently it is the happiness of virtue; that the joy of the eternal state is not so much a sensible or a tasteful or even an intellectual as it is a moral and spiritual joy; that it is a thing of mental infinitely more than it is a thing of corporeal gratification; and to convince us how much the former has the power and predominance over the latter, we bid you reflect, that even in this world, with all the defect and disorder of its materialism, the curse upon its ground inflicting the necessity of sore labour, and the angry tempest from its sky after destroying or sweeping off the fruits of it, the infirmity of their feeble and distempered frames, after the pining sickness and at times the

sore agony—yet, in spite of these, we ask whether it would not hold nearly if not universally true, that if all men were righteous then all men would be happy? Just imagine for a moment, that honour and integrity and benevolence were perfect and universal in the world; that each held the property and right and reputation of his neighbour to be dear to him as his own; that the suspicions and the jealousies and the heart-burnings, whether of hostile violence or envious competition, were altogether banished from human society; that the emotions, at all times delightful, of goodwill on the one side, were ever and anon calling the emotions no less delightful of gratitude back again; that truth and tenderness held their secure abode in every family; and on stepping forth among the wider companionships of life, that each could confidently rejoice in every one he met with as a brother and a friend—we ask if on this simple change, a change, you will observe, in the *morale* of humanity, though winter should repeat its storms as heretofore, and every element of Nature were to abide unaltered—yet, in virtue of a process and a revolution altogether mental, would not our millennium have begun, and a heaven on earth be realized? Now let this contemplation be borne aloft as it were to the upper sanctuary, where we are told there are the spirits of just men made perfect, or where those who were once the righteous on earth are righteous still. Let it be remembered, that nothing is admitted there which worketh wickedness or maketh a lie; and that therefore, with every feculence of evil detached and dis severed from the mass, there is nought in heaven but the pure the transparent element of goodness—its unbounded love, its tried and unalterable faithfulness, its confiding sincerity. Think of the expressive designation given to it in the Bible—the land of uprightness. Above all think, that, revealed in visible glory, the righteous God, who loveth righteousness, there sitteth upon His throne in the midst of a rejoicing family—Himself rejoicing over them, because formed in His own likeness, they love what He loves, they rejoice in what He rejoices. There may be palms of triumph; there may be crowns of unfading lustre; there may be pavements of emerald, and rivers of pleasure, and groves of surpassing loveliness, and palaces of delight, and high arches in heaven which ring with sweetest melody—but, mainly and essentially, it is a moral glory which is lighted up there; it is virtue which blooms and is immortal there; it is the goodness by which the spirits of the holy are regulated here, it is this which forms the

beatitude of eternity. The righteous now, who, when they die and rise again, shall be righteous still, have heaven already in their bosoms; and when they enter within its portals, they carry the very being and substance of its blessedness along with them—the character which is itself the whole of heaven's worth, the character which is the very essence of heaven's enjoyments.

“Let him that is holy, be holy still.” The two clauses descriptive of the character in the place of celestial blessedness, are counterparts to the clauses descriptive of the character in the place of infernal wo. He that is righteous in the one stands contrasted with him that is unjust in the other. He that is holy in the one stands contrasted with him that is licentious in the other. But we would have you attend to the full extent and significance of the term “holy.” It is not abstinence from the outward deeds of profligacy alone. It is not a mere recoil from impurity in action. It is a recoil from impurity in thought. It is that quick and sensitive delicacy to which even the very conception of evil is offensive—a virtue which has its residence within; which takes guardianship of the heart, as of a citadel or unviolated sanctuary in which no wrong or worthless imagination is permitted to dwell. It is not purity of action that is all which we contend for. It is exalted purity of sentiment—the ethereal purity of the third heavens, which if once settled in the heart, brings the peace and the triumph and the unutterable serenity of heaven along with it. In the maintenance of this there is a curious elevation; there is the complacency, we had almost said the pride, of a great moral victory over the infirmities of an earthly and accursed nature; there is a health and harmony to the soul; a beauty of holiness, which though it effloresces on the countenance and the manner and the outward path, is itself so thoroughly internal, as to make purity of heart the most distinctive evidence of a work of grace in time, the most distinct and decisive evidence of a character that is ripening and expanding for the glories of eternity. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” “Without holiness no man shall see God.” “Into the holy city nothing which defileth or worketh an abomination shall enter.” These are distinct and decisive passages, and point to that consecrated way through which alone the gate of heaven can be opened to us. On this subject, there is a remarkable harmony between the didactic sayings of various books in the New Testament, and the descriptive scenes which are laid before us in the Book of Revelation.

However partial and imperfect the glimpses there afforded of heaven may be, one thing is palpable as day, that holiness in its very atmosphere. It is the only element which its inmates breathe, and which it is their supreme and ineffable delight to breathe in. They luxuriate therein as in their best-loved and most congenial element. Holiness is their oil of gladness—the elixir, if we may use the expression, the moral elixir of glorified spirits. And in their joyful hosannas, whether of “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty,” or of “Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints,” we may read, that as virtue in the Godhead is the theme of their adoration, so virtue in themselves is the very treasure they have laid up in heaven—the wealth as well as the ornament of their now celestial natures.

We would once more advert to a prevalent delusion that obtains in society. We are aware of nothing more ruinous than the acquiescence of whole multitudes in a low standard of qualifications for Heaven. The distinct aim is to be righteous now, that after the death and the resurrection you may be righteous still—to be holy now, that you may be holy still. But hold it not enough that you are free from the dishonesties which would forfeit the mere respect and confidence of the world, or from the profligacies which even the world itself would hold to be disgraceful. There is a certain amount of morality which is in demand upon earth, but which is miserably short of the requisite preparation for Heaven—the holiness indispensable there, is a universal, an unspotted, and withal a mental and spiritual holiness. It is this which distinguishes the morality of a regenerated and aspiring saint from the morality of a respectable citizen, who still is but a citizen of the world, with his conversation not in heaven, with neither his heart nor his treasure there. The “righteous” of our text would recoil from the least act of unfaithfulness, from being unfaithful in the least as from being unfaithful in much. The “holy” of our text would shrink in sensitive aversion and alarm from the first approaches of evil, from the incipient contaminations of thought and fancy and feeling, as from the foul and final contamination of the outward history. Both are diligent to be found of Christ without spot and blameless in the great day of account—glorifying the Lord with their soul and spirit as well as with their bodies— aspiring after those graces which, unseen by every earthly eye, belong to the hidden man of the heart, and in the sight of Heaven are of great price; and so proceeding onward from

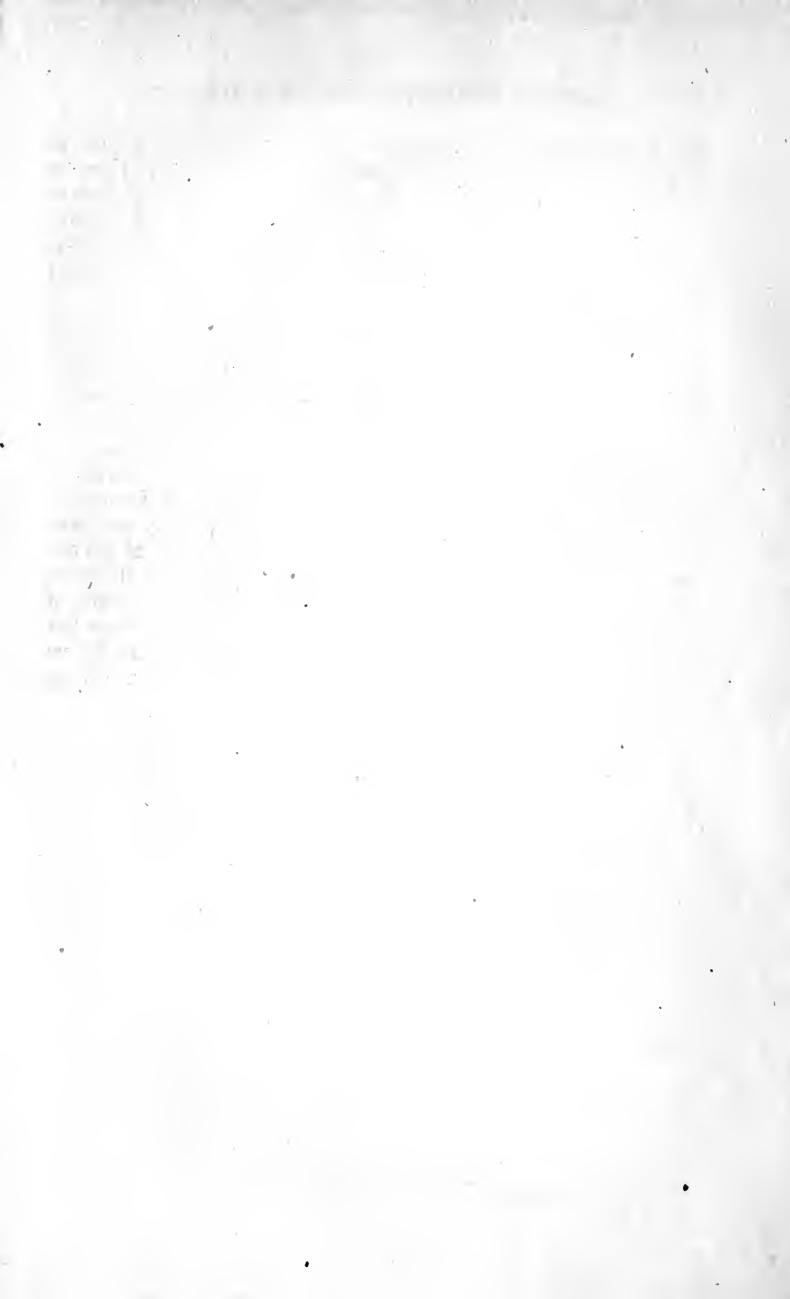
strength to strength on this lofty path of obedience, till they appear perfect before God in Zion.

We feel that we have not nearly exhausted the subject of our text by these brief and almost miscellaneous observations. The truth is, it is a great deal too unwieldy for any single address, and we shall therefore conclude with the notice of one specimen, that might be alleged for the importance of the view that we have just given, in purging theology from error. If the moral character then of these future states of existence were distinctly understood and consistently applied, it would serve directly and decisively to extinguish Antinomianism. It would, in fact, reduce that heresy to a contradiction in terms. There is no sound and scriptural Christian who ever thinks of virtue as the price of heaven. It is something a great deal higher, it is heaven itself—the very essence, as we have already said, of heaven's blessedness. It occupies therefore a much higher place than the secondary and the subordinate one ascribed to it even by many of the writers termed evangelical—who view it mainly as a token or an evidence that heaven will be ours. Instead of which it is the very substance of heaven—a sample on hand of the identical good which, in larger measure and purer quality, is afterwards awaiting us—an entrance on the path which leads to heaven; or rather an actual lodgement of ourselves within that line of demarcation which separates the heaven of the New Testament from the hell of the New Testament. For heaven is not so much a locality as a character; and we, by a moral transition from the old to the new character, have, in fact, crossed the threshold, and are now rejoicing within the confines of God's spiritual family. By the doctrine of justification through faith, we understand that Christ purchased our right of admittance into heaven—or opened its door for us. Is there aught antinomian in this? The obstacle, the legal obstacle, between us and a life of prosperous and never-ending virtue, is now broken down; and is it upon that event that we are to relinquish the path which has just been opened to welcome and invite our advancing footsteps? The doctrine of justification by faith is not an obstacle to virtue—it is but an introduction to it. It is in truth the removal of an obstacle—the unfastening of that drag which before held us in apathy and despair; and restrained us from breaking forth on that career of obedience in which, with the hope of glory before us, we purify ourselves even as Christ is pure. The purpose of His death was not to supersede,

but to stimulate our obedience. "He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The object of His promises is not to lull our indolence, but rouse us to activity. "Having received these promises, therefore, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

We expatiate no further ; but shall be happy, if, as the fruit of these imperfect observations, you can be made to recognise how distinctly practical a business the work of Christianity is. It is simply to destroy one character, and to build up another in its room ; to resist the temptations which vitiate and debase, and make all the graces and moralities which enter into the composition of perfect virtue the objects of our most strenuous cultivation. In the expediting of this mighty transformation, on the completion of which there hinges our eternity, we have need of believing prayer ; a thorough renunciation of all dependence on our own strength ; a thorough reliance on the proffered strength and aid of the upper sanctuary ; a deep sense of our infirmities, and constant application for that Spirit who has promised to help them ; that, in the language of the apostle, we may strive mightily, according to the grace which worketh in us mightily.







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