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S E R M O N S,

&c. &c.

BY

THE LATE REV. WILLIAM HOWELS,

MINISTER OF LONG ACRE EPISCOPAL CHAPEL.

WITH

A MEMOIR, BY CHARLES BOWDLER.

VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

J. HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY.
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO. PATERNOSTER ROW.
1836.

LONDON :
IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It is not necessary that I should detail the causes of the delay which, to my regret, has attended this publication.

I must beg once more to remind the reader, that no part of the contents of either volume was written or prepared for the press by Mr. Howels himself.

Owing to a miscalculation of the space that would be occupied by the Sermons now printed, I have been compelled to omit other matter, which, however, may yet appear at a future time, under a better arrangement; by which also some repetition, that may be discovered in this volume, will be avoided.

The poem, on the death of Mr. Jones, (which

has never been translated from the Welch,) is not at my command.

The former volume being out of print, another edition is preparing, in which some additional Sermons will be inserted. To that volume, instead of the present, will be affixed a list of the Subscribers to the Tablet, erected to the memory of Mr. Howels, in Trinity Church, Islington."

* The additional matter here referred to, will be printed separately for the convenience of the purchasers of the first edition.

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MEMOIR.

THE Rev. William Howels was born in the month of September, 1778, at Llwynhelyg, a farm-house close to the town of Cowbridge, but within the parish of Penllyne, in the county of Glamorgan; and he died on the 18th of November, 1832, being then in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

His life was not marked by any of that variety of incident, or of those extraordinary vicissitudes or events, which create and sustain their own interest; and gratify the biographer with the feeling, that the attention of the reader will be withdrawn, by the very nature of what he is recording, from all recollection of himself.

But however interesting biography may sometimes be in this respect; or whatever charm may

be imparted, as many a time there has been by a skilful hand; the highest object and the best result (in comparison with which all else is of little value) will be sought in the instruction to be gathered, as in the present instance, from the life of one honoured and blessed of God; who has fought the fight, finished the course, won the crown; who lived and moved among us in all the energy and beauty of a life from heaven, the remembrance of which will enhance the value of the lesson and endear it to the heart.

Mr. Howels was the eldest of twelve children. His father, Mr. Samuel Howels, was a considerable and very respectable farmer, of strong natural understanding, well skilled and active in agricultural pursuits, and of unquestionable integrity. He was, I believe, naturally of an irritable disposition. The mention of this cannot, I hope, give pain to any; and a little passing reflection may be allowed. The tempers, as well as other moral features of parents, are not unfrequently inherited by, or imparted to, their children. It was so in this instance; for the natural temper of Mr. Howels, the subject of this memoir, was of a character perhaps more

than ordinarily proud and impatient :* and should any be disposed to quarrel with me for this admission, I beg it to be remembered, that it is no part of my design to gratify an undisciplined and unwise partiality, which would drown all truth in indiscriminate admiration. Mr. Howels was a great and a good man ; he was both good and great in a very uncommon degree : but like all who have gone before him, he was by the grace of God what he was, both as a follower of Jesus Christ and a minister of his gospel.

The mother of Mr. Howels was a sensible, discreet, and pious woman ; whose conduct as the head of a family and a member of society, was regulated by christian principles, and adorned the gospel she professed. Both parents were regular in their own attendance and in requiring that of their children on the services of the church : and of the mother it is more particularly to be mentioned, that though clogged with the charge of a numerous family, and the many household duties which consequently devolved upon her, she not only found

* He was, in youth, high-minded, but kind in his demeanor, especially to his juniors.

time to attend divine worship herself, but she took care that her servants also enjoyed the same privilege.

What Mr. Howels had witnessed in her conduct in this respect in early life—and which he knew, therefore, to be attainable, (where there is a willing mind,) beyond what is accomplished in many families of professing Christians—imparted confidence to the tone of faithful admonition, which he pressed home habitually upon the consciences of some, by whom the religious instruction and spiritual improvement of domestics are too little regarded; and for whose absence from public worship excuses are too easily admitted, if they are not indeed sought for and encouraged. It would be well if the conduct of the mother of Mr. Howels were the subject of more imitation than it is: and if what I am writing should meet the eye of any such person, they will remember that it is his warning, not my own; it is indeed a higher than either, which I record, when I remind them, that those servants, who, through their wilful neglect, shall die in ignorance, will appear in judgment against those by whom they should

have been taught to know and serve the God of their fathers.—None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

The whole conduct of Mrs. Howels towards her children, was eminently adapted to bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Those who were accustomed to attend the ministry of Mr. Howels, and still more those who had intercourse with him in private life, will remember the high testimony which it was his delight to bear to her memory, and the glow of filial affection in which he expressed his gratitude for all her tenderness and all her care in the earlier scenes of life. Dear to him she was in the remembrance of these; and doubly so in the assurance, that alike accepted in the Beloved, they should sing together the song of Moses and the Lamb. Of mutual recognition in a future state Mr. Howels entertained no doubt.

It was remarked by one of a generation which has passed away, that none turned out so well in life as those who were educated by their mothers: and it is said by Plutarch, that a large proportion of the great men of Greece and Rome were

thus educated. How great is the extent of maternal influence, has been the subject of observation in all ages ; and it must of necessity be great, since it is her province not only to direct the first efforts of the understanding, but to gain the affections in their earliest dawn. And it is by such influence that the heart is won. It never yet was carried by storm. In youth and in age alike its attitude is resistance. Heaven itself triumphs over it by tender expostulation : and those parents who will secure to themselves the obedience of their children, must cultivate and cherish their affections. If these are possessed, be the errors of a child what they may, here will be found at once a check on his wandering and a pledge of his return.

But I am writing of one who went not astray. That the care bestowed on this interesting child in infancy and youth was not unrewarded, will be abundantly manifest.

It does not appear from any thing I have seen, and I am little curious to inquire, at what precise moment or period of life he was sensible, or became the subject, of that change of mind which was unquestionably wrought in him—the nature

and circumstances and date of which it is, by some classes of Christians, deemed almost essential to ascertain; and which, under the specious title of personal experience, has led but too frequently, I am persuaded, to a great deal of mere enthusiasm, if not hypocrisy, and to the establishing of a most fallacious and unscriptural standard in the human bosom: for the affections, not the feelings, are the true test of character; and the torture of the one is a bad substitute for the discipline of the other. It is not impossible—it is, I think, very probable—that Mr. Howels was himself at the time unconscious of the change; and that the incorruptible seed being early sown in the heart, its growth might not be visible for a season to any human eye.

It is certain, however, from his own letters and journal, and from the testimony of those who were his bosom friends, that he was at an early period of life, the subject of impressions of more than ordinary strength. This would arise in some degree from the character of his mind, which was of a nature to grasp firmly whatever it received. His impressions of the evil of sin, the holiness of God, and his attributes of omni-

potence, omniscience, and omnipresence, were strong: and in childhood, any deviation from duty into which he had been led, especially any neglect or profanation of the Sabbath, was followed by a sleepless night. Happy season of life—when the mind is enlightened, the heart warm, the conscience tender!

Where children have been removed by death, at an early age, the fondness of a parent will catch with some eagerness at the evidences of a spiritual frame of mind which may have been evinced: and we see, from time to time, instances of a similar anxiety towards the living objects of affection. This is most natural: but it may be questioned whether the adopted standard is always judiciously selected. Passages of scripture committed to memory may be very freely recited, and at times happily quoted—clever observations may be made, and interesting questions asked; even so as to indicate what is, apparently, personal experience in religion—there may be exhibited an acquaintance with the doctrines of the gospel and the harmony of the truth revealed—inconsistencies in sermons and books may be detected, and errors may be con-

demned : but the inquiry still remains, Is pride humbled ? are evil passions subdued ? Is the waywardness or perverseness of natural temper corrected ? Are vanity and the love of it mortified ? Is there a conformity to the mind of him of whom it is emphatically said that he pleased not himself ? Nothing is more lovely than the early opening of christian graces ; and it is grievous to see what is so undoubtedly and substantially good, yielding to that which may be but the mutual vanity of parent and child, ministering the one to the other, to the injury of both. And so those who are bustling, forward, flip-pant, and presumptuous, are deemed to be monuments of grace : while the meek and lowly followers of the Lamb are treated only with derision and disdain. But this will not be the judgment of the great day.

How simple, how searching, and how sure is the test applied by the Saviour—Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. By their fruits ye shall know them. But it may not become me to write thus, and there is nothing that may not have been better said before.

Mr. Howels was first sent to school at an early

age; but the care that watched over him under his father's roof was not wanting in the selection of those to whom he was confided: and indeed, considering the age at which boys are commonly sent to school, it is to so little purpose that the morals of a child should be protected at home only to be corrupted elsewhere, that whatever confidence we may have in their sincerity, we can place none in the discretion of those parents, who seem to think it of little moment that their children are exposed to almost certain corruption.

Of Mr. Howels' scholastic education little need be said. He acquired the rudiments of the classics under such instruction as the principality then afforded. Masters, school-fellows, and companions, alike concur in this, viz. that as a youth he was in disposition liberal and kind; quick in apprehension, docile, diligent, and persevering; profiting as far as any one could by the means of education which he enjoyed. But these were not abundant. For the care of the morals of their pupils, his instructors deserve higher praise. Of one of his masters, yet living, it is reported to me, that he was scrupulously attentive to the moral principles and conduct of

those committed to his charge : and I insert, with pleasure, the following testimony of one, who was the bosom friend of Mr. Howels, as alike creditable to all. “So amiable were his manners, so sober his conversation and free from all alloy, that though this intimate intercourse subsisted for many years, at an unguarded time of life, the companion of his leisure time is not sensible of having suffered a moment’s pain at the retrospect, in more mature and enlightened years, of the many hours passed in the fellowship of William Howels.”

In this respect, as in others, he exhibited in youth the same qualities that marked his character in riper years : a peculiar delicacy of mind unpolluted in early life ; an adherence to truth as opposed to every description of falsehood ; and uncompromising integrity. It is mentioned of him, not only (as it has been to the credit of many others) that he would never tell a lie to screen himself from punishment ; but that when a monitor among his school-fellows, though his sociable and cheerful temper was evinced in joining readily in their amusements, no familiarity would induce him to forget his re-

sponsibility as the guardian of their morals, and all stood in awe of his integrity in this respect.

He exhibited through life that peculiar delicacy which characterized a mind uncontaminated in the days of youth—a blessing, to which I fear that many must be, in a measure, strangers, whose lot it has been to pass through one of the public schools of England. I have not, however, dwelt upon those brighter days in his dawn to discourage any, the retrospect of whose early life is darker : for the fountain is flowing, and the hope of the future is not built on the remembrance of the past. But those who are young may be spared many sorrows that must else attend them in after life, and many a struggle too, if wise in time.

The principle of integrity to which I have referred as one prominent feature in his character, was rather remarkably evinced at the age of about fourteen years, when he was taken from school to be placed with an attorney, and thus trained to the practice of the law. After a brief trial he returned home, and, at his earnest solicitation, this plan for his advancement in life

was given up. I have no doubt, from what I have heard him relate on this subject, that he had witnessed, in the professional conduct of some individuals, what would have given pain to any well-principled or well-regulated mind : but it is to be remembered, that there was in him an original dislike to the profession of the law, and a preference for studies of another kind. Some of his countrymen have undoubtedly acquired, and I fear not undeservedly, the character of a litigious people. Perhaps the records of no country can furnish instances of legal contests carried on with all imaginable bitterness of spirit, and untiring perseverance, equal to those in the principality. This Mr. Howels knew early and well, and nothing could be in more direct opposition to the principle which lived and reigned in his own bosom : but that the profession of the law, and that branch of it for which he was designed, was not, in his estimation, incompatible with the integrity of the christian character, I need not stop to remark ; were it not that it affords me the opportunity of recording his attachment to those (Mr. Foster, Mr. Donald, and others,) who are gone

like him to glory, and to some who are yet on their journey thither.

After quitting the office of the solicitor alluded to, whose name I never knew, and when of the age of about fifteen years, Mr. Howels was placed under the care of the late Rev. John Walters, an aged clergyman, residing at Cowbridge, with whom he continued to study for about four years : and it is to this period that the testimony of his bosom friend and companion, already quoted, more immediately refers.

Mr. Walters is said to have been a respectable scholar : but I apprehend that there and in those days the contests for classical honours were not very severe : and in spite of what some of his countrymen still maintain, Mr. Howels was not a good classical scholar ; though it is admitted by all, that his ardour was intense, and his capacity and diligence undeniable.

Mr. Walters was the publisher of a Welsh Dictionary of good authority ; and it is probable that under his tuition, Mr. Howels acquired a love of etymology, which never afterwards forsook him ; but in this, as in other respects, he had to contend with difficulties arising from the want of a skil-

ful hand to regulate his studies and give to the energies of his mind a right direction. It might indeed be regretted, that the powers of his mind, unquestionably of a very high order, were not more effectually called forth : but as he had a natural taste for literature and great enthusiasm of character, he would probably have been diverted from the study of divine truth to the prosecution of inferior objects.

The value of a critical acquaintance with the original languages is indisputable ; but it does not always happen that the greatest scholars have been the best divines. What eminence Mr. Howels might have attained in the one character we know not—what he was in the other may appear very imperfectly in these volumes, but will be manifest in that day, when “ they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” Whatever Mr. Howels did acquire, was made subservient to the truth and spirit of the gospel.

In the month of June, 1797, Mr. Walters died :—and in the warmth of his affection, Mr. Howels wrote an elegy upon him, which ap-

peared in the Gloucester Journal, and seems to have attracted the notice of its much honoured editor, Mr. Raikes; who subsequently inquired for and was introduced to Mr. Howels, to whom he kindly offered his patronage and support, if he were inclined to write for the press. But he was destined for higher and better things. Mr. Howels possessed a grandeur of thought, splendour of imagery, and energy of diction, which are proofs of a poetic spirit, and his qualifications for poetry were of a high order. The elegy written by him on the death of the Rev. David Jones of Llangan, being in his native language, is necessarily sealed to the English reader: but I am assured by more than one competent judge, that it is a production of no ordinary kind, and full of poetic spirit. Be it what it may, it is triumph enough for the principality, that it can lay claim both to the author and the subject of it.

It only remains to be said of Mr. Howels historically, as regards the first stage of his life, viz. previous to his leaving Wales for Oxford, that he was for some time under the care of Dr. Williams, the master of Cowbridge School.

His talents and acquirements had gained for him general esteem and acceptance among the cultivated ranks of society; while the amiable qualities of his heart—his warmth of affection, and readiness to fulfil every kind office, joined to the most unreserved frankness of manner—rendered him beloved and esteemed by all ranks in his neighbourhood. He was strictly moral and conscientious, but his acquaintance with religious doctrines was at this period imperfect and of a legal kind. It was an observation of Mr. Goode, “that the most steady and consistent Christians he had ever known, were those who had a legal beginning;” that is, who had begun their christian course in a legal spirit, taking the lowest step first—giddiness and a fall being often the consequence of an earlier and higher flight. Of one youth, who was in his estimation somewhat forward and presumptuous, I remember his saying, in his very plain manner, “If that young man be a child of God, and his earthly father do not chastise him, his heavenly Father will.”

In the month of April, 1800, Mr. Howels was entered at Wadham College, Oxford, just at the

time when the writer of this memoir was introduced to what has ever since been his sphere of employment. A reference to these dates and circumstances gave rise to some very interesting reflections, on the last evening that Mr. Howels came abroad—his words still seem to be on my ear—“Yesterday we were children—to-morrow we shall be in the dust: oh may we know that we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!”

I can well imagine the feelings with which he entered on his new scene of life at the university; but whatever might have been attained by him, in spite of early disadvantages, and with the increased facilities now afforded, it pleased Him who ordereth all things and does all things well, to deprive Mr. Howels of the health which is indispensable to study. He continued, indeed, to cultivate the Greek and Latin languages, and to these he added Hebrew, in which he persevered to the end of his life. He attended at the Bodleian, of which he was appointed a sub-librarian; but his strength declined; he became unequal to any continued confinement; and though the meditation which attended his walks was of

inestimable value in the study of his own heart, (his mind turning in upon itself,) other means were requisite to his attainment of academical honours, thus placed beyond his reach. Those who knew him can well believe, that if he were unable to take a distinguished degree, he would be but little inclined to graduate at all; which accordingly he never did. But for this there were other causes co-operating: a long cherished but unrequited attachment to one every way worthy of him, had deeply wounded a mind more than commonly sensitive, and well nigh drank up his spirit. To this may be, in some measure, referred a habit of abstraction very prejudicial to his intercourse with society in after life; and which contributed to establish a singularity of manner that he never quite overcame. Within about the last year of his life he remarked to a friend, with reference to this period, that there was a kind of haze thrown over it, so that he could recall none of the incidents: he added, "I should like to know many things that then happened; the time appears like a confused dream." The friend to whom he said this, and who was well acquainted with the circumstances,

wisely avoided entering into any explanation of what had then long gone by, a recurrence to which would have but excited painful feelings in a very delicate frame.

His retiring from the university as he did, may still be involved in some mystery. I have reason to believe, that after the death of his mother, which happened in the end of 1801, there were wanting those aids which she had been enabled to afford him. Be the causes few or many, those detailed, or others to me unknown, he remained at Oxford till some time in the year 1803, in ill health, suffering under the pressure of affliction, with blighted prospects and a wounded spirit; and all those morbid feelings which could scarcely fail to arise under a consciousness of intellectual superiority, to which his actual or relative situation in the university did by no means correspond. Yet were all these things, though apparently against him, working together for his good in the highest sense: dark and painful as he found the discipline to be, he had not been made what he was without it.

In the midst of all this disquietude, a student of Jesus College, with whose family Mr. Howels

had been acquainted at Cowbridge, was seized with a dangerous fever. Mr. Howels, very ill himself at the time, but knowing the value of kind attention in sickness, sat up with the patient night after night, till the crisis of the fever was past and the danger gone. This was not the way to improve his own health, which continued to decline ; but that would be nothing in his estimation. A most interesting part of the character of this extraordinary man was sympathy, which shone forth in him with peculiar lustre, combined with a readiness to sacrifice his own comfort, and himself too, to be of service to others. The delicate, affectionate, unwearied attention, which he bestowed on those who were in any trial of sickness or sorrow, none can understand who did not know him *well*. To be with an afflicted friend was his delight, and then he was in his element ; leaving at an immeasurable distance beneath him all the artificial refinements of a cold and heartless world. Of him it may be truly said as of his blessed Master, that he pleased not himself ; if reviled, he reviled not again ; illustrating his own illustra

tion of a well-strung and well-tuned instrument, that must yield harmony, though struck by the rudest hand.

While in the comfortless state which I have described to be his at Oxford, he was induced to accompany a fellow student to a Baptist chapel, where the late Mr. Hinton then officiated. To this visit, and his subsequent attendance at the same place of worship, reference has, I believe, been made, as the season and the means of his effectual conversion. It is not from any unkind feeling of jealousy towards the Baptists, or a desire to diminish the high fame of Mr. Hinton, that I venture to record a different opinion. That the ministry of Mr. Hinton was both consolatory and instructive to Mr. Howels, I do not doubt: but I question much the correctness of the inference, that this was conversion. I see no reason to doubt the reality of his conversion in early life, for either of the reasons which have been assigned. His views of divine truth, as a system of divinity, might be, and probably were imperfect; in some degree erroneous: and his thirst for literary fame might be disproportionate.

But a change from Arminianism to Calvinism is not conversion from sin and Satan to God : and without deciding upon the extent of that love of literature or desire for academical honours, which may consist with a mind rightly disciplined ; it will be conceded, at least, that though it may in some instances exceed its proper limits and require to be checked and chastened, by the hand of him who is infinite wisdom as well as infinite love ; it is not incompatible with the sincerity of heart and simplicity of mind which are the offspring of a heavenly birth.

Affliction was good for him, and it was sent : the bright and dazzling prospect of a sunny day was obscured. He needed consolation, and it was vouchsafed : for he that hath torn will heal ; he that hath smitten will bind up.

The patriarch Job was not converted in affliction, for before he was afflicted he had this testimony—that he feared God and eschewed evil : but he was taught most valuable lessons in affliction, and learned the way of God more perfectly. When to him the earth was shaken to its centre, all creature resting-places broken up, and he was brought low before the Lord, he

learned assuredly, that in the storms of time there is no billow on which the soul of man may rest and rock itself to sleep, as the petrel on the wave: but that they who repose with all their cares and sorrows on the bosom of the Redeemer, whatever be their portion on earth, shall assuredly say at the end of their pilgrimage, “It is good for me that I was afflicted: he hath done all things well.”

I believe that, as with Job and many others, so it was with Mr. Howels—he learned in affliction to acknowledge the sovereignty of God, to prize his mercy, and to walk more humbly with him.

But whatever might be the nature and extent of the blessing which Mr. Hinton was the honoured instrument of imparting; the fact that it was received at the hand of a minister of a denomination differing from the church to which Mr. Howels belonged, and in which he was destined to be eminently useful, may, and undoubtedly ought to, remind us, of the near relation which subsists between the various branches of the spiritual vine; and the mutual charity which should consequently actuate them one towards

another. It is mentioned, as an instance of commendable and amiable liberality in Mr. Hinton, that although Mr. Howels continued to attend his ministry, and cultivated his society in private, while he remained at the university, Mr. Hinton never sought to obtrude his peculiar sentiments as a Baptist; but simply laboured to build up his young friend in the faith of the gospel. His conduct in this respect appears in something like contrast to that of a priest of the Roman Catholic church, by whom Mr. Howels was about this period accosted, in one of those solitary walks in which, owing to the peculiar state of his health, he was obliged to pass much of his time. But the attempt to make a proselyte of Mr. Howels was not of long continuance. A book was presented to him by the priest, containing prayers to the Virgin Mary, which Mr. Howels was therefore not slow to return; and it appears that he never afterwards allowed any renewal of intercourse with the donor. In so doing, he did wisely; for it is wisdom not to parley with error or with sin. Mr. Howels was accustomed to refer to this circumstance with some expressions of disapprobation; whence it

may be inferred, that there was something disingenuous in the method of making the attempt.

On leaving Oxford, which he did I think in the early part of the year 1803, Mr. Howels retired to Llwynhelyg, or, in English, Willow Grove, with the design of preparing himself for the ministry, and for ordination as a clergyman of the Church of England. But, as he was through life warm and constant in his attachments, having rested a single night at home, he went without delay to visit a friend with whom he had become intimate at school; and how interesting such friendships sometimes are I need not say. This friend, when he and Mr. Howels last parted, was of good moral character, but too much under the influence of legal and self-righteous principles. There seems to have been no correspondence between them during their separation; for at this interview, it unexpectedly appeared that the change which in the interval had been wrought in Mr. Howels, had been accomplished in the bosom of his friend. The same gracious Being who had watched over both while at a distance from each other, had by different instruments imparted to both the same

blessing: so that being of one heart and one mind, they could rejoice together. The bond of union, thus renewed by a firmer and closer tie, was severed but by death: and now they have parted for a season, with a hope in the survivor, that shall assuredly be realized, of a blissful reunion in glory.

Mr. Howels, now at home, applied himself, as well as his health allowed, to those studies which were properly preparatory to ordination. A mutilated journal, written during the summer of 1803, evinces, that though prevented from close application to books, he was keeping a watchful eye over the varying frames of his heart; was growing in the useful though painful knowledge of his own unworthiness, and thus in real and genuine humility towards God. At the commencement of 1804, being then by divine goodness restored to better health, he was enabled to renew his studies preparatory to the ordination, which was expected to take place at Llandaff in the course of about half a year. He accordingly proceeded with his characteristic ardour and diligence, together with earnest unremitting prayer for the divine blessing. Having a strong convic-

tion of the utility of being well acquainted with the roots of a language, he committed the Greek primitives to memory ; and he applied himself to the study of those books with which it was requisite that he should be acquainted. Short as the period of preparation was after so long an interval of study, and that accompanied with so much suffering, he was qualified to pass a very satisfactory examination. The following passage is supposed to have been written by him, about the time now referred to. “ When I was withheld from study by the dispensation of a dark providence, and especially after I had been in a measure enlightened to appreciate the worth of books written by pious and learned men, I was for a time at a loss to understand what the Lord intended to do with me, or what was the purpose of this dark dispensation towards one apparently designed for his ministry ; and was almost disheartened. But now, since I am enabled to resume my studies in the holy Scriptures, I seem to see a wise and kind Father’s hand in the whole process, and desire to thank him sincerely. He shut me up, indeed, for a season within the folds and pages, as it were, of my own heart, to read,

closely and intimately, the dark characters impressed there by sin, till I was horror-struck at the contents, and could say with the apostle most sympathetically, "O wretched man that I am!" But now, blessed be God, that I am enabled to peruse the pages of Scripture, I am helped to understand, in a way I never did before, the character of the sinner, there portrayed, exactly corresponding with my own; and, unspeakable mercy! I can now discern also the glory, preciousness, and invaluable uses of the divine Redeemer, as exactly suited to the wants of such a sinner, and altogether such a High Priest as became us."

As the first mention which I can find of his intercourse with Mr. Jones of Langan, already named, is connected with this period, I suppose that it was about this time that he had the happiness to become known to that good man. It would require the heart and the head of Mr. Howels himself, with all his enthusiasm and warmth of affection, to sketch the character of Mr. Jones, or describe Mr. Howels' admiration of him. The brightest evidence on earth of what he was is to be found still in the principality, where

he continues to be embalmed in the hearts of those who knew him. He must have been a very extraordinary man; more remarkable, however, for meekness of disposition, and skill in reading and winning the heart, than for those great intellectual powers, by which Mr. Howels was himself distinguished.

The parish of which Mr. Jones was the incumbent, and of which Mr. Howels, at his ordination, became curate, is in the immediate neighbourhood of Cowbridge: and if Mr. Howels was captivated, as he was early and in good earnest, with the sincerity, simplicity, and warmth of affection, that were prominent in Mr. Jones; the latter was not less quick in discerning the natural talents and promise of extraordinary usefulness in his young friend; the vigour of whose mind, his clear conception of the truths of the gospel, his ardour and devotedness, and his humble, open, affectionate spirit, were so congenial to his own character.

But while qualifying himself for the work of the ministry by study, and, as I shall presently mention again, by instructing the poor around him, and in attending the ministry and cultivating

the society of Mr. Jones and other good men, he was attacked with serious illness, which soon issued in high fever. He was confined for several months, and was at one time in very imminent danger, apparently, to himself and others, in the very jaws of death. But that was a season of peculiar comfort to him. Of the tranquillity and peace which he then enjoyed, he often spoke with such evident delight, that at times, when the journey of life seemed long, and he was sighing for his rest above, there was something like the expression of regret, that he had not then been removed from the miseries of a dark and dying world ; but all such feeling was quickly subdued under the consciousness of the work that had been given him to do ; and then, forgetting the things that were behind, and reaching forth to those that were before, he pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

As it was not by the aid of an academical degree that Mr. Howels was to attain celebrity and rank in the church ; so neither was it by an extensive range of study pursued through successive years of vigorous health, among the pon-

derous volumes of learned authors, that he was to become a useful minister for a season in Wales, and then a burning and shining light in the metropolis of England. It was rather by a deep acquaintance with the anatomy of his own heart, acquired in affliction, under the discipline of the Holy Spirit; and a knowledge of the perfect adaptation of the gospel to supply every want, gathered by deep meditation and fervent prayer from the fountain-head of all instruction. To meet one difficulty which usually attends clergymen of the established church, on taking orders, who, for want of all initiatory process, are less qualified than they might be for the performance of public duties, Mr. Howels in the prospect of his approaching ordination, employed himself in visiting the sick poor in the contiguous village of Penllyne; reading to, exhorting, and praying with them: and this practice becoming of course more known in the village, there was gathered round him in the evenings, in one or other of these humble dwellings, a little congregation of villagers, who are described as listening to him with respectful attention and deep interest. By thus habituating himself to

speak freely to a plain and artless people, he became prepared, on his ordination, to commence his ministry as a ready and somewhat practised preacher, well adapted for those among whom he went to minister, and in favour with them.

The curacy of Langan was his title for orders, both as deacon and priest. He was ordained deacon in June 1804, by the late Dr. Watson, then Bishop of Llandaff, a man of very kind disposition, and liberal in his opinions: which operated not unfavourably for Mr. Howels, who might possibly have been rejected by some more scrupulous about admitting into the Church of England an ungraduated candidate for holy orders. Endeavours were not wanting to prejudice the Bishop against him; and his examination of Mr. Howels was addressed to those points on which his lordship hoped to impart to him more enlarged views. But he found Mr. Howels better prepared than he had expected; free from, and opposed to, that which affords the most obvious ground of objection to the Calvinistic creed; and not unequal to the task of at once maintaining his own system and combating his lordship's. The examination was conducted by

the Bishop in a spirit of great kindness; and, delighted with the freedom and frankness, and, no doubt, the ability displayed by the candidate, he closed it with a friendly and familiar remark, to the effect, that they had rather exchanged places, for that instead of examining he was himself examined.

The condition of the established church in the principality was, at the time now referred to, very inferior to what it now is: for the livings being for the most part very small in value, the churches few, and in such a condition, many of them, as to be more fit for herding cattle than receiving a christian congregation; and in many of the parishes the ministers wholly ignorant of the only language in which they could lead the worship of the people, or preach the gospel to them, or hold indeed any communication with them, their spiritual instruction had mainly devolved upon other teachers. With few exceptions, the most laborious and useful ministers were to be found among the Calvinistic Methodists; not as opposed to the Church of England, for no spirit of opposition was cherished by them; but to supply, for a season, her lack of service. It was to aid, not

to obstruct her, that these excellent men put forth their strength: and notwithstanding some excess of enthusiasm, which broke out in their congregations, under the excitement to which a people of ardent temper are peculiarly liable, (and which, for want of timely and wholesome restraint, became so general among some as to be an admitted part of their worship,) the truth, as it is in Jesus, was faithfully preached; the people were instructed; the progress of infidelity was stayed at a very critical period; and the principality was preserved by their means from the intrusion of errors which have from time to time afflicted other portions of the church of Christ in this kingdom. God was with them, and his blessing crowned their labours.

With these men did Mr. Jones and Mr. Howels unite with one accord, striving together in the work and labour of love. They attended the meetings of the Methodists, and preached to their congregations; indeed, wherever the people could assemble there they were ready to instruct them. A mutual friend writes to me thus:—

“The first time that I had ever an opportu-

nity of hearing Mr. Howels, though I was then scarcely past the age of childhood, I well remember to have been exceedingly struck with the general style and character of his sermon. The whole scene was indeed remarkably striking. Mr. Howels was preaching (which at that period he was occasionally accustomed to do, in various parts of the principality) at six o'clock on a fine summer's morning, in a large field, to an immense congregation, at the great annual association which for many years was held in that neighbourhood. Though several ministers of very distinguished popular talents preached in the course of that day, the only recollection which I now retain of the sermons is that of a very fine illustration employed by Mr. Howels. I have at this moment a vivid impression of the effect produced upon my mind, when the preacher, with all the glow of an enkindled imagination beaming in his countenance, compared the resurrection of the body of the saints to the phoenix rising from the ashes of its parent, and winging its way aloft to bask in the radiance of the sun."

At an anniversary meeting, held at a chapel in the western part of Glamorganshire, at which

Mr. Jones and his curate were appointed to preach ; Mr. Howels having modestly prefaced his discourse with an acknowledgment of his youth and inexperience, and expressing a hope that his venerable father who was to follow him, would kindly correct any mistake into which he might fall, and cover any imperfection that might be found in his discourse, proceeded to deliver a sermon on the sonship of Christ, in such a style of sublime theology as excited the admiration and deeply impressed the feelings of a large assembly. Mr. Jones, an experienced man and veteran minister, aware, by means of personal trial, of the dangerous effects of great and early elevation on the human mind, no sooner commenced his discourse in succession, than, adverting to his highly-gifted and beloved curate, he conjured the congregation to pray, that the Lord would be pleased to *lay thorns enough* in the path of the young man who had just addressed them ; that so he might rather go safely, though painfully, through much tribulation to glory, than being raised to a pinnacle of spiritual pride, after a morning of bright promise, might set, like a winter's sun, in a dark cloud. A review of the subsequent path

of the interesting subject of this appeal, may fairly lead to the persuasion that the prayer was not unanswered.

The whole course of proceeding that I have before described was known to the Bishop of the diocese ; who, in consideration of the integrity of their character, the simplicity of their zeal, and the blameless tenor of their lives ; the peculiar state of the country, the habits and wants of the people, and the good result that visibly flowed from their labours, allowed it to pass without rebuke. On one occasion, indeed, a representation of these irregularities having been made to his lordship, from a quarter, and of a kind, to compel some notice, having sent for Mr. Jones, (after some assurances of personal esteem which were very sincere,) his lordship expressed the regret he felt, in being compelled to remonstrate with him for preaching in a variety of places, and on unconsecrated ground. Mr. Jones's reply was to this effect. " My Lord," said he, " I have never so done ; when the Son of Mary set foot on this earth he consecrated every inch of it ; if not, I am afraid no consecration of your lordship's will do it any good." It will not of

course be imagined, that Mr. Jones intended this as a serious and sufficient defence ; but he probably knew it to be as much as the occasion required : and he was allowed to continue in his accustomed course, useful, loved, and honoured as few have been. To whatever cause it is to be attributed, the system pursued by the then Bishop of Llandaff, in the management of his diocese, was wisely adopted. The application of the ordinary discipline of the establishment to the state of the principality, in those times, would have been absurd : and to make a degree at one of the English universities a pre-requisite to the ordination of those who were to minister there, unreasonable in the extreme. There may not indeed be wanting, some who think an inflexible adherence to the strict discipline of the established church, essential to her existence ; and thus magnify the medium of vision till the object of sight be lost. The Bishop, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Howels, all, as I hope and believe, felt alike, that they were in reality subserving the best interests of the church of England, in what they thus did, and allowed to be done :—that it is not by shutting himself up in a fortress and fighting

from canonical ramparts, that she is at any time to be sustained ; but by coming abroad to bless with an enlarged heart, and with a liberal hand. I may probably have occasion, before I close the memoir, to return to the subject, were it only to repel the imputation against Mr. Howels, of being untrue to his ecclesiastical allegiance. In the mean time, from nothing that I have said will it, I hope, be inferred that I am insensible to the value of the established church ; upon the prosperity of which, I am persuaded, the well-being of the country mainly depends ; or that I am ignorant of the need of wholesome discipline among her members : only let it be remembered, that it is to no claims of antiquity, or honour of an exalted pedigree, to which she may refer, however justly ; nor even to any theoretical capacity and capability of good that may be inherent in her ; but to the plain practical evidence and enjoyment of that good actually done by her, that the Church of England must at all times make her appeal.

Wales is an interesting portion of the land of our nativity. For very many years, error of any magnitude has found no home there : Popery

never triumphed there: and within the memory of the present generation, how many are the names that command our esteem, and have a place in our hearts! Since the time of which I have been writing, when Mr. Howels began his career of glory among the simple peasantry of Glamorganshire, the church of England has done much to re-assert her claim to the respect, and to regain her hold on the affections, of the people: and though the only connexion which I can claim with the principality is the bond of christian feeling, I may be allowed to rejoice in the good that has befallen her, and that is yet, I trust, in store for her.*

At the church of Langan the numerous converts made under the ministry of the Rev. D. Jones, in the course of his settled labours in the parish, or occasional excursions to different parts, with others, usually assembled once every month, on the Sabbath, to receive the communion at the hands of their venerated pastor. Mr. Jones now

* Should these pages meet the eye of any who have it in their power to contribute to the college recently established, near Lampeter, I may be permitted to assure them, that pecuniary aid is needed, and would be well applied.

advancing in years, and residing in Pembrokeshire, was no longer constant in his attendance on these occasions. His young curate, while a deacon, was, of course, unable to supply his place; but no sooner was he admitted into full orders, than he was readily allowed to take the whole ministry upon him. And now his strong mental powers, roused into full exertions by the interesting monthly assemblages of deeply impressed Christians; his clear views of the doctrines of the gospel in all their bearings; and his masterly conception of those parts of divine truth which are ordinarily deemed abstruse; struck the attentive and intelligent audience most powerfully. The first and second covenants; the fall of Adam as the covenant head of his whole seed; the person of Christ as God-man, and the covenant head of his spiritual seed; the deep and destructive influences of sin in the natural man, and the counteracting operations of the Holy Spirit in the subjects of grace; the awful and terrible grandeur of the divine attributes as revealed in the law, with their still brighter and fuller glories, as manifested in the gospel; and all harmonizing in the salvation

of the believing sinner;—these weighty topics, set forth in energetic and often eloquent though simple and artless language, impressed the hearers in no ordinary manner; and led them early to form anticipations of his future extensive usefulness and distinguished eminence in the sacred ministry. There were some, indeed, of a weak constitutional frame, or of slender experience and knowledge of the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel in their heights and depths, who were at first rather startled than convinced—rather disposed to cavil! than admire the bold statements of the young divine. But the more strongly-formed minds, and the more experienced in religious matters, both of doctrine and practice, early received him with unqualified cordial regard; and, without hesitation, declared their full belief that he was an extraordinary man, designed for a great and important work in the Lord's vineyard.

“ After an interval, he was requested to undertake the charge of the adjoining parish of St. Mary Hill, and subsequently that of Landyfo-duck, situate at some distance in the hilly part of the country to the north of Langan. His re-

ception was cordial in each of these parishes; and substantial good fruits appeared in the conversion of some, and in the edification of the parishioners in general. His great affability towards all ranks, his warm benevolence of heart and unequalled readiness to perform every kind office in his power, endeared him also to them, as a man and a Christian. In the parish of Landyfoduck, he had the mortification to find some few individuals deeply imbued with Socinian principles. He had thus early occasion to wield controversial weapons. Possessed of strong reasoning powers, and tenderly alive to the awful state of these unhappy wanderers from the fold of Christ, he took much pains in private conversation with them. He found them so deeply versed in all the wily subterfuges of that erroneous sect, that he could make little impression upon them; and he was heard to observe afterwards, when in London, that he had met with plain farmers in Wales who were an overmatch for some renowned teachers of this school, who thought highly of their own powers and attainments.

“ During this period a malignant fever broke

out in that parish. Mr. Howels, wholly intent on the faithful discharge of the duties of his pastoral office, and deeply concerned for the eternal interests of his afflicted parishioners, devoted his whole time (the Sabbath only excepted) to visiting the sick. Hoping that such a crisis might be favourable to the reception of the truths of the gospel, he frequently attended the sick-bed of one unhappy Socinian, a farmer, who was endued with strong natural talents ; but without any satisfactory result. Death at length interposed, and put an end to the faithful pastor's efforts in his behalf. Many others fell victims to the disorder ; and the warm benevolence and unshaken faith of the young minister were, and continue to this day, the theme of admiration in the mouths of aged and experienced Christians throughout the neighbourhood.

“ Other striking proofs might be adduced of his lively sympathy with the distressed, and his promptitude in using (successfully) his best endeavours for their relief, whether connected with him by particular ties or those only of a common nature. During the period of his early ministry, and, for the most part, to the conclusion of his abode in

Wales, being favoured with a comparative measure of health, he read the works of a considerable number of valuable divines, more particularly Drs. Edwards, Williams, Owen, and Doddridge."

In the year 1811, Mr. Jones died. On the last Sunday evening of his life, being with a friend in a field, the air very serene and the sky unusually clear, it was remarked to him as a singular circumstance, that there was no cloud on the face of the firmament. Mr. Jones having looked above him and around him, replied, "It is so indeed; and I bless the Lord, my spiritual atmosphere is just as bright." In this delightful state he retired to die, and slept in peace.

The varied, and at times peculiar circumstances attendant on the death of Christians, is a subject by which some anxious minds have been needlessly disturbed. The secret of this disquietude will, perhaps, be found to lie in that undisciplined state of feeling which is equally fertile with perplexity in other instances.

The time of life, the natural disposition or frame of mind, the character and duration of a last or earlier sickness, the extent to which the animal

powers may be reduced, with much besides that is merely constitutional, may have great effect—to say nothing of the peculiar trials with which a dying bed may be assailed; and the purposes which God, in that wisdom which is infinite, may be accomplishing, and of which he is surely not bound to give account to any.

The value of a dying testimony is the encouragement it affords to survivors. Ecstasy is not a necessary ingredient in the triumph of faith. It is perhaps of a more doubtful character than a tranquil state. But further:—Instances of assured triumph in death are sufficiently numerous for the encouragement of the weak. Were there no exceptions, where would be the exercise of that faith by which, and not by sight, we are to walk.

The word of God, not the personal experience of any, is to be the rule of faith to all survivors; and God is to be honoured by the belief of his word, though its truth were never confirmed by the dying testimony of any of his children.

The private evidence of a dying-bed is nothing in comparison with the tenor of a Christian's life. And if this surer and safer test be afforded

what can be the strength of that faith which doubts the issue?

It will be seen, by a comparison of dates, that Mr. Howels had been curate to Mr. Jones for the space of about six years. On the death of this venerable man, Mr. Howels came to London. Hopes had been entertained that he might succeed to the charge of the parish and the flock which had been already so much blessed: but these hopes were not realized; and they who had for years been led in quietness and peace to the green pastures and still waters, were literally scattered upon the mountains. It is much to be regretted, that patronage and the right of presentation to a living, should be too often treated as a matter of worldly favour, and the means of professional advancement for a relative or friend, rather than as a serious and sacred trust.

Mr. Howels, now parted from his beloved congregation, felt as if at once severed from his home. He seemed to have lost his main bond of union with Wales, and turned his thoughts, after an interval of suspense and perplexity, to England. He had still two curacies, and a libe-

ral remuneration for the instruction of a private pupil. His friends, unwilling to lose him, pressed him to stay; arguing the matter on providential grounds—that the door was not shut against him in Wales, a competent provision still awaiting him, and a sphere of usefulness still open to him. “No,” said he, “this is not the ground for an evangelical clergyman; the higher ranks care nothing for the gospel, and the lower have in general rather a predilection for the simple usages of the meeting-house than the more formal rules of the established church.” His friends still strove hard to induce him to alter his resolution; and one of them ventured to warn him of the danger of precipitance in a measure so important. But the loss of his beloved congregation weighed heavily on his mind.

He could not brook to live near them without enjoying their communion: and as he must be separated from them, he felt that he could bear the separation best at a distance: and his resolution became fixed. In the autumn of the year 1811, he left his sorrowing friends in Glamorganshire for London, whence he returned home

but once; viz. after an absence of about a year and a half.

In the early part (as I think) of 1812, Mr. Howels, through the introduction of his friend, Mr. J. Bassett, became curate of the united parishes of St. Andrew by the Wardrobe and St. Anne, Blackfriars, of which the late Mr. Goode was the rector. My own personal intercourse with Mr. Howels began not very long afterwards, and in rather a singular manner. Going out of town in a post-chaise, I overtook Mr. Howels near Kennington, on his way to visit Mr. Goode, who was then at a cottage near Tooting. The day was very fine and very hot. Mr. Howels was in the middle of the road, walking, or rather bounding along, with peculiar vigour and elasticity; carrying an open umbrella over his head, his hat being upon the umbrella, and his coat slung on the other arm; which coat, being made of some glazed stuff, was as little like other coats as its owner was like other men. With some difficulty he was prevailed upon to ride to the cottage. Before we parted, I had a promise from him that he would visit us; and I cannot think without emo-

tion of the simple, unaffected diffidence with which, after a lapse of several weeks, the effort was made, and the promise kindly fulfilled. Thus began our acquaintance, which gradually ripened into intimacy, then into friendship, and ended with his death. As it is an actual, not an ideal character, which I am describing, I make no apology to any one for what follows. There was in Mr. Howels (at this period more particularly) a great dissimilarity and departure from the ordinary habits of society. The simplicity and singularity which marked the free unpolished manners of his country, gave to his appearance and behaviour an air of eccentricity; and being himself perhaps not altogether unconscious of this, there was a reluctance on his part to mix in the society of those with whom he was, in other respects, most qualified to associate. Partly in consequence of this, but very much more the unexampled boldness and simplicity with which he preached, Mr. Howels did not experience an early or kind welcome from his brethren in the ministry; and for several years his intercourse with what may be called polished society was very limited. I must admit, for those who knew

not the powers of his mind and the warmth of his heart, that there was a good deal to be overcome. His habits were not in accordance with some established rules of society, to which he was ludicrously inattentive. A good deal, however, arose from the sad state of his bodily health, which rendered all confinement painful; so that he was often obliged to leave the table or the room abruptly. And some there were, of course, to whom his habit of smoking was insurmountably objectionable. Yet such is the waywardness or caprice of human nature, that another clergyman of the Church of England might be named, as unpolished in behaviour, as inveterate in the habit of smoking; and who superadded to both the privilege of saying what he pleased, however rude it might be, and however offensive; whom it was the fashion for many a year not only to endure but to caress. And those who stumbled at so small a rock of offence in Mr. Howels as a little singularity of behaviour, were not aware how much they lost by declining an intercourse with him, before which all such feelings would soon have given way.

Having mentioned the practice of smoking,

which Mr. Howels brought with him from Wales, and in which he long indulged; I must beg it to be remembered, that to one who was much alone, who suffered habitually and acutely, and to whom reading for any length of time was a painful exercise, it must have brought great relief; to say nothing of the difficulty of contending with a habit once contracted and established as this was. How much he struggled against it, from time to time, few perhaps can tell. But it will be remembered, that in one of the last sermons that he delivered, while exhorting others to persevere till they conquer, he referred to his own case for illustration and encouragement. He was well known to have been, for a long time, very much weaned from the habit; but then, for the first time, he declared his triumph over it. "I have fought," he said, "many a battle with a pipe upon my knees; I was beaten again and again, but the victory is mine." It is apparently a small matter; yet it may afford a lesson, or give encouragement, to some who are still on the field of battle, (and who is not?) whatever be the enemy with which they are contending. To yield in a small

conflict is but preparing for defeat in severer struggles.

Mr. Goode was a man of strong natural understanding, possessing a clear intellect, great good sense and a sound judgment; not deficient in feeling, but not easily excited—constant rather than susceptible. He had great firmness, because great moral courage. In some respects he was very unlike Mr. Howels; but no two men could more rightly, or on proper grounds more highly, appreciate each other than they did. When, therefore, it happened, as was to be expected, that not long after Mr. Howels became his curate, a letter arrived from Dr. Randolph, the then Bishop of London, desiring to know who and what the new curate might be; for that a gentleman attending at St. Anne's on a certain day, expecting indeed to meet with something extraordinary, had had his expectations more than realized by the extravagance of the curate then officiating; Mr. Goode, with unflinching fidelity to Mr. Howels, replied respectfully, but firmly, that the gentleman, the curate in question, was a native of Wales, with whom he had received all proper credentials; and that he could find no blame in him,

unless it were that he possessed perhaps a little too much Welsh fire to suit cold English hearts. This line of conduct, steady and unostentatious, was honourable to Mr. Goode; and there were not wanting other evidences of his esteem and regard.

It is painful to reflect on what was then the actual condition of Mr. Howels: the curate of a London parish, whose employment consisted in the daily performance of parochial duties, and in reading the prayers of the church about four times a week; for a stipend—what it was I know not, but it could be only such as a rector of a small living, with a large family, could afford to give—not sufficient to supply the ordinary wants of a man in his situation in life; especially of a frame so delicate as his, shaken by sickness, and suffering, without intermission, from the wounded spirit that had its abode indeed, but could find no home there.

It is a sad truth to tell, but told it ought to be, that at one period during the early part of his residence in London, Mr. Howels almost suffered from want. Such a degree of privation, it has been truly said, does not, in the present day, ordinarily befall the faithful minister of

Jesus Christ. But God was preparing him by affliction for very uncommon usefulness in the church; and those who best know the trials which he was called on to endure, can and do bear ample testimony to the fortitude, humility, and unrepining submission, by which, in the worst of times, he was eminently distinguished. That there were those who, had they known it, would gladly have shared their last crust with him, is certain, and his own family would most readily have supplied his wants: but he was formed to endure, not to complain. He could ask for others, but never for himself; and in soliciting for them, there was evinced peculiar delicacy and discretion. Of his own liberality it were vain to write, with any hope of doing justice to it: in this, as in other respects, those who knew him will supply the deficiency; and to those who knew him not, it is beyond my power to convey an adequate idea of what he was. Words may indeed tell of things, but they will not embody and describe feeling; without which Mr. Howels must remain unknown to all but a few, as to some of the finest and most delicate features in his character.

For some time after he came to London, Mr.

Howels was not known at all as a preacher; and the impression made by his manner of reading prayers was any thing but favourable. Those who heard him only in latter years are not aware how much he had improved in this respect; for he had taken indeed very uncommon pains to overcome his Welsh dialect, and soften and improve his enunciation, which was at one time peculiarly harsh. He was also very attentive to the study of the English language; so that no one could surpass him in accuracy of expression where it was requisite, or in the uniform correctness of his emphasis. Mr. Goode always preached as long as he was able; but about the last year of his life, his bodily strength was sinking under a wasting and incurable disorder; and then the charge of the pulpit devolved upon Mr. Howels, to whom the privilege of again preaching, as he had been wont to do, was like a magic touch, that kindled anew all his energies, and almost infused into him a new life.

How well and how powerfully he then preached, I can myself testify, for I heard him constantly, and with delight: and though, from a variety of causes, the character of his ministry

became afterwards more consolidated; more calculated to meet and silence particular errors; and more adapted to the complicated state and wants of a metropolitan congregation, than had been needed by the simple-minded inhabitants of his native country; yet I never heard from his lips any sermons more animating and impressive, or, in some respects, more instructive, than those which he delivered from the pulpit of St. Anne's at that period. But I have higher authority than my own for this; and to the honour of Mr. Goode I record it. When he returned home, after an unavailing visit to the sea side, though unequal to the labour of preaching himself, he was yet able to attend public worship on the Sunday morning. The church was crowded with a larger congregation than had attended his own ministry, which in a meaner mind might have excited some feeling of jealousy, and inflicted silence. But I remember well both the thankfulness he expressed at the manner in which his place was supplied, and the gratification he had himself enjoyed in hearing Mr. Howels:—"There were thoughts," he added, "in that sermon that I would give any thing to remember."

Aware as Mr. Howels was of the great value of elementary truths, and the importance of establishing them thoroughly in the mind, he was careful to word himself, both in the definition and the illustration of truth, with perfect accuracy. One great beauty of his ministry was his perpetual recurrence to first principles, so established in his own mind, and with the application of which he was so familiar, that they were brought to bear upon every point, and at any moment.

In the month of April 1816, Mr. Goode died; and the right of presentation for the next turn being in the parish of St. Anne, a parochial election ensued; than which I must be allowed to say, that I have never known, and cannot well imagine, any thing more deplorable; though persons are to be found so thoughtless as to advocate this mode of appointing the parochial ministers of the church throughout England.

The friends of Mr. Howels put him forward as a candidate, and exerted themselves in his behalf; which (he being the curate of the parish) they were well entitled to do. Other

candidates came forward; and then ensued the scenes which are invariably enacted on such occasions. A popular election of any kind is enchanted and not hallowed ground: for the temptations that beset a man in a state of excitement, or of liability to it, are peculiarly powerful; and he who knows his weakness will not rashly brave the danger. Yet he who while the day of specific trial, whether of this or any other kind, is looked for, and when it approaches, and when it is come, will cast himself upon the Lord and try the effect of prayer, and trust in God, instead of giving the reins to his feelings, and rushing like the horse to the battle; he shall not want for wisdom or strength.

The majority against Mr. Howels was not large in the first instance; it was reduced to almost nothing on a scrutiny which followed; and it might have been carried further with a prospect of ultimate success; but resort must have been had to the Court of Chancery; to protracted and expensive litigation: and a frightful feeling of irritation would necessarily have been kept alive in the parish. The simple in-

tegrity of purpose and of conduct evinced by Mr. Howels, throughout the contest; the exuberance of feeling towards those by whom he was befriended; and the readiness with which he relinquished the object that was before him; and, in resigning all further contention, left himself in the hands of the Lord, without any adequate means of support: these are not to be forgotten in time or eternity. The result might not be, and probably was not, of much importance in a pecuniary point of view, to either of the other candidates: to Mr. Howels it was at that time every thing on earth; and no one living can perhaps appreciate to the full, that triumph of principle which dictated to him the surrender of his claims, to the living of Blackfriars.

All that was now left to him was the Sunday evening lectureship at the Church of St. Antholin, in Watling Street, the net income arising from which was, I think, about *eighteen pounds a year*. An attempt had been made to procure for Mr. Howels a lectureship which was held by Mr. Goode in the parish of St. Lawrence Jury, in the city of London; but this had also failed;

and when, shortly afterwards, he was chosen to a lectureship in another parish, the rector refused to allow him the pulpit, and the appointment was therefore nothing worth.

That this refusal was conscientious I do not deny : but the apostle Paul was not less so before his conversion : and as martyrdom is not on the one side, so neither is persecution on the other, any test of truth, whatever it may be of sincerity. Up to the moment of his death, there were in the establishment those who would have thought it little less than unpardonable, to have admitted Mr. Howels into their pulpits : albeit, they never heard him preach ; probably knew of his existence but by report ; and had about as accurate an idea of his ministry as they could have of the employment of their own antipodes. Yet were there others, from whom might have been expected better things ; who, with equal ignorance of Mr. Howels, and of the instruction they might have received from him, had they condescended to learn, habitually spoke of him in terms of contumelious reproach.

In the year 1817, Mr. Howels became the lessee of the episcopal chapel in Long Acre. He

was thus apparently removed above the pressure of all want. But, in reality, he was as far removed as ever from affluence. The money advanced was to be repaid, and Mr. Howels could have no rest till it was done ; for he was as eager to pay a debt as he was quick to feel, and prompt to acknowledge, an obligation : perhaps there was but one thing in him that surpassed either, and that was a desire to relieve another from both. But besides that the money advanced was to be repaid ; the requisite repairs of an old building were to be undergone, all expenses paid, and all wants supplied, by the letting of seats to a new congregation, at a time when Mr. Howels was but little known and very imperfectly appreciated. I state no more than I know to be the fact, when I say, that for the greater part of the period during which Mr. Howels was the minister of that chapel, he derived from it little more than a bare subsistence ; and this notwithstanding that he lived a single man, a lodger in an humble dwelling, and a very retired situation. He was through life a poor man : he lived at a very small expense ; and yet for every thing like comfort, he was dependent upon the voluntary,

and occasional, and, as far as man was concerned, the precarious supplies, which he received from unknown quarters. His circumstances were for the most part, and for a long time, little understood ; and although when at length they became known, so that the congregation, by whom he was beloved, as few ministers have ever been, did very generally agree to raise the pew rents in order to give Mr. Howels what he never had yet had, even a moderate income ; and there was a prospect that, in the fruit of his labours, he might receive what would place him above the reach or fear of want ; and supply, for it would have done no more, the comforts as well as the necessaries of life ;—his eye is closed in death. At the very moment when the prospect of rest on earth is to be realized, it is exchanged for a better and an enduring inheritance. And much as I have missed him here, and while here must mourn his loss ; I own the wisdom and the love that took better care of him, than the short-sighted fondness of his friends desired : though it be most true, that to whatever length of time his life had been extended, goodness and mercy would have followed him still, and he would have been safe

at last. The observation once made by Mr. Howels himself ought alone to suffice: "God will take his child to himself at his full growth; he knows when that is."

Of those acts of individual kindness, liberality, and affection, which, as I hope, all christian ministers experience, instances were not wanting in the life of Mr. Howels; and they were assuredly not lost upon him, than whom there never breathed a man more susceptible of kindness, or who cherished more abidingly than he did the memory of the heart. Mr. Howels won to himself many friends, but he was still a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth. He lived and died poor—poor in circumstances, as he was also poor in spirit: but rich in faith, an heir of glory and of God. It has been said by some, indeed, that it was needless to give money to him, for he did not know the value of it. A person having once observed of another, that if you said a good thing to him, he did not understand you, it was rather pithily asked in reply—"Did you ever try him?" That Mr. Howels did not put the same value upon money, or estimate its worth upon the same principles with

some other men, is most true ; for he put absolutely none upon it beyond supplying necessities, paying just demands, and doing good to others. It is equally true, that he was the subject of frequent imposition. The noble character of his mind, and the consequent generosity of his disposition—his entire freedom from guile, (so entire that it was difficult to believe that he had lived for half a century in such a world as ours,) and his habitual cultivation of that spirit which thinketh no evil, made him peculiarly liable to imposition.

It may have been a subject of reflection, how it should happen that he who has the clearest and strongest convictions of the fallen nature of man and his innate corruption, and of the deceitfulness of the human heart ; and the most painful assurance of that truth in his own personal experience ; so that there is no evil of which he is not consciously capable if left to himself—unguarded by a hand, and unguided by wisdom not his own—should be most liable to be deceived by the craft of cunning men, and be the least capable of detecting imposture ; for as face answereth to face in a glass, so doth the

heart of man to man. The explanation is, however, very simple. He who knows the worst of himself will hope the best of his fellow-creatures. He who is just to himself will be merciful to others. He who is conscious of having received mercy will delight to extend it. Freely—yes, in every sense, and in every way—freely ye have received, freely give. It is found invariably, that those who are most tender to themselves are most severe to others; and, consequently, that they show the least of that mercy to others of which they have the greatest need themselves.

It was but by slow degrees that a congregation assembled at Long Acre Chapel: and it is by very much more than I will venture to say for the metropolis and its neighbourhood, as I have seen asserted elsewhere, that, “upon his becoming the minister of that chapel a large congregation of intelligent Christians gathered round him,” and met joyfully and fed richly under his ministry: for in truth it was not so. It was by slow degrees that the chapel filled; and to the last Mr. Howels was not a popular preacher. Error of various kinds has ever been stirring among us; and it is because Mr. Howels would

never keep any terms with it, or give it shelter for an hour, or abate one iota of plain, direct, uncompromising, undying hostility to it, that he was less popular than he might else have been. He preached not to please men but God, and in his pleasure to profit men.

I now approach that part of my subject, which should describe more particularly the ministry of Mr. Howels.

The Atonement was, throughout, its prominent feature—the sun of its firmament, round which all other truths revolved like the planets in their due and appointed course. The great doctrine of the Trinity was held by him as all-important. The love of the Father in giving the Son for the work—of the Son in undertaking that work—of the Holy Spirit in forming the humanity of the Son, and carrying it through the work, and applying the benefit of the blessing to man; with, all the fruits of equal necessity flowing from it; that so, man, by nature dead to God and alive to sin, might by his power become dead to sin and alive to God; and be presented in, and with, and by, the Saviour to the Father, an heir of God and a joint-heir with Christ. This neces-

sarily involved the deity of Him who died, and rose, and liveth to make intercession; for as mere created existence, however pure and however exalted, can have no superfluous merit, and therefore can possess nothing to be either imputed or imparted to another; so also Deity could not suffer and die; and without shedding of blood their could be no remission: and as the punishment of sin is no arbitrary act on the part of God, and perfect harmony must reign in all the divine attributes; justice must be satisfied, or mercy could not flow forth on a guilty world. However mysterious in some respects, and however painful in all, the truth may be; yet that man is fallen, and wholly fallen too, was, with Mr. Howels, of indisputable and primary importance.

Man is so little willing to refer to first principles, that he is startled by the very simplicity of truth. Nothing, surely, can be more simple or more obvious, than the impossibility that any moral agent should fall partially, or be partially polluted. Some principle must be ascendant in his bosom: he cannot love and hate the same object at the same time. The language of the

first transgression to God was, “farewell for ever.” Man, as a sinner, must need an atonement for his sin, and a better righteousness than his own; and the blessing of these, in the nature of things, can become his only by faith: and hence the value and efficacy of faith; not as having any merit in itself, but as the hand stretched forth to receive the blessing.

Mr. Howels received and stated the doctrine of Justification by Faith in all its simplicity and all its power: he allowed nothing to be mixed with it.

But still further: as it is not in the power of God himself, because it is not consistent with his perfections, to make an unholy being happy; it is requisite in the very nature of things that man should be delivered from the power and love of sin equally with its guilt; and that he should have a meetness for the enjoyment of the presence of God in glory. Hence, therefore, the necessity of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness. He who is by nature dead to God and alive to sin, must die to sin that he may live to God. And thus all the perfections of God are glorified in the salvation of him

who repents and believes the gospel; for what is repentance, but a return from the service and the paths of sin, unto the Lord who will have mercy, and unto the God who will abundantly pardon? And how is he thus brought back in repentance, but by the same Almighty Spirit, who having carried the humanity of the Redeemer triumphantly through his work, will accomplish it in the hearts of his people? Here then is one of those maxims which contained a world of truth to be had in remembrance—that the infinite value of the atonement of Christ was paid down to purchase the image of Christ in the heart.

It was a great object with Mr. Howels to show the perfect harmony that subsists in the character and dealings of God towards his creatures; reconciling his sovereignty in showing mercy, with the equity of his moral government—that none can be saved irrespectively of a sacrifice; and none can perish irrespectively of their own personal and actual guilt. Here again is an axiom to be borne continually in mind; that the curse of God by reason of sin, cannot reach one who is not conscious of transgression;—that as imputed righteousness without imparted holiness cannot lead to

or live in heaven; so neither could imputed sin be destructive of any, separate from inherent evil. Mr. Howels dwelt much on this, viz. that it is, and must of necessity be, the duty of all alike to repent of and forsake sin; and this quite irrespective of any revelation or promise of mercy: but that the principle of repentance, that change of mind in which it consists, is not the less therefore a blessing bestowed on him who does repent and believe to the saving of the soul—that the blessing of salvation is offered conditionally to all to whom the message of the gospel comes; but is found an unconditional blessing in the hearts of all by whom it is received. These, then, are simple truths. That man is, by nature, necessarily, actually, and obviously, the subject of sin, and as such justly obnoxious to the wrath of God; that all being by nature born in sin, all, to be saved and to be happy, must be delivered from it. Therefore did the Saviour take pure humanity upon him in its earliest stage, that he might sap the source of sin; and hence the security of those who die in infancy.

Of all things to be named, that which has most perplexed the mind of man in every age, is the origin of evil. Mr. Howels did not at-

tempt to explain or account for it: but he did continually what is far better—he directed the minds of his hearers from unprofitable speculation about its origin, to the profitable contemplation of its cure: reminding them at the same time, with reference to the fall of Adam and of his posterity in him, that it is necessary, both as a consequence and punishment of it, that those who are partakers of the fall, should not be able to understand how they fell. That however men may cavil and complain of being without their own consent born in a state of sin, and with an evil bias—which, uncorrected and unre-moved, will issue in final ruin—the fact that such is their state is undeniable; and that they who find shelter in the second Adam, and they alone, will cease to quarrel with their union with the first. What avails it that we should know how we fell, since fallen we are; and what should we gain by a denial of the extent of that fall, but an increased obligation to personal obedience; and in a denial of the need of mercy, an increased hindrance to the reception of it? Without sin there could be no death; but death passes upon all, for that all have sinned: and in this

we read the certain fact, that the life of all the seed of Adam is forfeited to God. It is not indeed necessary, since a Saviour has been provided and has died, that all who are believers in him should pass through death to glory; therefore Enoch was translated and Elijah was taken up into heaven; and all will not sleep in death though they shall all be changed.

Having referred to that which more than any other truth hath perplexed man, I must allude to that which more than any other is awful and appalling; far, very far be it from me, to say that it is a subject less in any degree than the most awful and most appalling—the eternity of future woe. Mr. Howels enforced this certain and plain truth, on a consideration of the nature of sin,—the death of Christ,—the offering of an infinite person as the only sacrifice for it,—and the plain declaration of the word of God. As one of these has not been, I think, commonly urged as strongly as it was by Mr. Howels, I mention it, though very shortly. That the punishment of sin is not an arbitrary act on the part of God—that he must punish it, or cease to be—therefore when the eternal Son stood as the represen-

tative of man, the surety of his people, he could not be spared. And if man die unchanged by the Spirit of the living God, *how and when will he cease to sin?* There is no provision for it there, where hope never comes: it is not in the nature of punishment to change, but to harden; and the evil principle which man carries with him from time into eternity, will but gather new strength to fight against God and every perfection in him, continually and for ever. For God does not banish the creature one hair's breadth farther from him than the creature has already banished himself from God. There is one thing pure in hell; and that is the justice of God. The command lives there as it does through the whole range of moral created intelligence—Love me: this is all that is required at the hands of Satan himself. And what is it that constitutes hell, but the disobedience of the creature to this most reasonable and right command, the perpetuity of which is indispensable to the happiness of all.

As I have before observed, the great beauty of Mr. Howels' ministry was its perpetual recurrence to first principles, which he brought to bear on every point doctrinal, practical and ex-

perimental. That all good flows from God, and good exclusively—that sin can have no higher origin than the creature. This is one which he pressed home with all his accustomed force and simplicity ; showing it to be obviously and intuitively true, that God could not predestinate that which is contrary to his own nature. “ What,” he argued, “ is sin but that which is opposed to God, to his will, to his command ? If then God be the author of sin, it is not opposition to him, and no such thing as sin can exist.” Mr. Howels abhorred the very thought of such an averment.

Again—That man, being by nature in a state of alienation from God, must be wholly indebted to that which is spontaneous on the part of God, and be restored as the lowly recipient of mercy, or not at all. This he urged as a simple and obvious truth. It was not by mitigating the condition of the transgressor and then necessarily qualifying every other statement in scripture, that Mr. Howels commended his message to the consciences and the hearts of men ; but by a full exhibition of every truth : well knowing that in the covenant of grace there is provided, and that in the gospel there is proclaimed,

a remedy for all evil ; that so where sin hath abounded grace may much more abound : that there is no condition in which any one of the fallen race of Adam can be found, of moral degradation and woe, for which adequate provision has not been made ; it being ever to be borne in mind, that the gospel meets the responsibility of man as fully as his wants.

To one point, bearing not at all remotely on this, I must allude. Mr. Howels could never tolerate the notion, which has been advanced by some, that a less sacrifice than that which has been provided, *might* have sufficed, had it pleased God to appoint it—than which Mr. Howels justly considered that a more dangerous position was never taken, or one that gives more vantage ground to error and the enemies of truth. It is indeed a fallen, feeble, and most unacceptable attempt to give glory to God ; as if he were honoured by the compliment of having wasted the wealth of heaven ; to say nothing of the argument, such as it is, being wholly suicidal ; since if sin might have been pardoned without a sacrifice, it may yet be pardoned without an interest in any.

I remember having heard from Mr. Howels,

at the house of Dr. Jennings, at Hampstead, a fine burst in conversation applicable to this subject, though not then arising out of it; in which he illustrated the remark, that God is not only the most bountiful but the most frugal of all beings; nothing being wasted, nothing lost in his hands. The leaf that falls in autumn is preserved to minister to the fruitfulness of the coming year. Let us only apply this as a test to the subject just referred to, and we shall not be without a light in which to view it.

A reference to other points which were occasionally prominent in the ministry of Mr. Howels necessarily leads to some notice of errors which he never ceased to combat: and I may mention as almost peculiar to him, and that which made his ministry the more interesting, that instead of leaving error to die or pass away of its own accord, he never failed to meet it, whatever it might be. His resolution to do this made his preaching valuable to students in divinity. I may assure the reader, that some of those who are now the most eminent and useful ministers, have confessed their obligations to Mr. Howels for having cleared their minds from doubts,

and given to them more complete views of truth in all its harmony ; and I shall not, I hope, be thought to over-rate the effects of his ministry, if I say, that it has contributed very materially to elevate the tone of preaching in general ; that by not shunning any part of truth, but by exhibiting all in its just proportions, he did much to remove prejudice against some doctrines, which have been opposed, simply because they were viewed, either apart from others with which they are indissolubly connected, or in an erroneous light, rather than set forth in the simplicity of Holy Writ.

The great feature of his ministry was the exhibition of the fulness and freedom of the provision made for the recovery of a transgressor. It was his delight to make known to perishing man the perfect and finished work of the Redeemer, for the pardon of every sin and the supply of every want : he reprobated in the strongest terms the errors of that system which limited the preaching of the gospel to believers only, and did not invite sinners to Christ. Speaking of ministers who preach the doctrine of Reprobation, he described them as holding out a flaming sword at heaven's

gate to frighten away the so called non-elect ; instead of standing, as they ought, at the gate of hell, to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come.

It has been well said, that if we were to mark out the distinct peculiarities of Mr. Howels' preaching, we should probably find the most striking and decided to have been, the remarkable union, which it displayed, of the doctrines of grace in all their fulness, with the most rigid inculcation of the claims of practical duty. The two points which appeared to form the standard principles in all his sermons, were the *sovereignty of God*, carried out into all its exercises and manifestations, on the one hand ; and the *responsibility of man*, spreading throughout all the ramifications of moral obligation and liability to penal justice, on the other. These were the two great polar truths, if we may so speak, about which the whole system of his theological opinions and instructions seemed to turn. Grasping these two great principles with a firm and unfaltering hand, he was enabled to range with ease and freedom over the whole field of scriptural truth. He was enabled to look with an admiring and adoring eye

into the mysteries of the everlasting covenant ; and there to behold the length and breadth, and height and depth of that love, which passeth knowledge, on the one hand ; while on the other he surveyed, in the light of immutable and eternal justice, the fall of man, and its whole train of consequences ; as terminating in the wilful, and therefore guilty, abuse of the powers wherewith he was originally endowed.

Of his own ministry, Mr. Howels said on one occasion, that there were certain joint principles from which it was deducible :—

1st. The sovereignty of God in all his gifts and blessings, including the gift of his Son and of his Holy Spirit : a sovereignty which gives him the right to confer any good, on any individual, to any extent.

2ndly. The universal authority of God. A moral agent cannot exist over whom God has not the most absolute authority.

3rdly. The secret purposes of God's sovereignty cannot militate against his legislative authority.

4thly. The *universal* responsibility of the creature ; I do not say *general*, because it is without

any exception whatever : the responsibility of the creature ever rising in proportion to the clearness of the revelation which visits him from God.

5thly. The covenant of the Eternal Three, evidently intended to meet the responsibility of man as well as his wants.

These cannot be denied : they are found in Scripture. There are apparent contradictions in Scripture ; but if we refer them to these first principles they will be reconciled. A minister armed with these, follows his hearers everywhere, even to the inmost recesses of their own bosoms : armed with these truths, he shows to the transgressor the flames of hell, and says to him in the name of the living God—" Repent, and believe the gospel."

The retrospect of a long life is not necessary to the remembrance of a time, when the ministry of the gospel in the church of England was at a low ebb : whereas, at the present time it is well known to be a subject of anxious inquiry among pious dissenters, to what it may be owing that there is such a manifest increase of unction and of blessing attendant on the

establishment, and a corresponding decrease among their own people. The answer is easy. God blesses, and ever will bless, the faithful ministry of his own word; the truth as it is in Jesus, apart from the advocacy of all systems; and still more, when, in freedom from a secular spirit, the object in view is to win souls to Christ, not to make proselytes to a party. Men may go on inquiring to the end of time, and weary and harass themselves, and be lost, in the pursuit of another reason: but while God and his truth remain the same, the cause of unfruitfulness will be found in this—the want of simplicity of purpose in themselves, and an attempt to make the ministry of the everlasting gospel subservient to a sinister or secular end.

The unfounded and absurd imputation upon Mr. Howels, that his ministry was a stepping-stone to Antinomianism, may be effectually met by a few instructive sentences which have fallen from his lips.

“The religion of Jesus Christ alone comprises heaven, because it comprises purity: and before a creature can be brought into heaven where God is, he must be led into the purity of God.

‘Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.’ Here is integrity.”

“Supreme attention should be given to the Word of God and to the ordinances of his house. Never suffer any thing that is not of real importance to keep you from the house of God. If tempted on any occasion to do so, ask yourselves, will this reason bear the scrutiny of the eye of Omniscience; if not it is good for nothing and worse than nothing.”

“This is a day of much reading, but not of profound thinking. Men read too much and think too little. Pray continually for the light and strength of God’s Holy Spirit. If you have gone on twenty or thirty years in the spiritual life, you stand as much in need of the same Holy Spirit as when you first believed. Remember this, for God will not have his Holy Spirit dishonoured. He will make us know that we are his workmanship in Christ Jesus.”

“We hear much of the minutiae of morals, and of the necessity of introducing them into the pulpit; and to this I agree: but it is needful, also,

to introduce the sublimity of the doctrines of Scripture, else the pulpit would soon degenerate into a heathen forum.”

“The peace and friendship of the Creator is absolutely necessary to the well-being of every moral agent. It is not in the power of God to do him good in a state of alienation from himself: he has not only provided an atonement, but he has provided also his Holy Spirit to apply that atonement.”

“That knowledge of doctrine which does not endear the preceptive part of God’s word, only hardens the heart and leads to every degree of evil. The man who knows the doctrine and does not honour the precept, is in the most awful state of all.”

Is more desired? “We are saved from nothing if we are not saved from sin. Little sins are pioneers to hell. The backslider begins with what he foolishly considers trifling with little sins: there are no little sins: there was a time when all the evil that has existed in the world was comprehended in one sinful thought of our first parent; and all the evil now, is the numerous and horrid progeny of one LITTLE sin.”

“Do not trifle with sin. If you can possibly avoid it do not witness sin; if you can possibly avoid it do not hear it spoken. It is madness to expose yourselves to contamination.”

“The sufferings of Christ alone atoned for sin. He suffered that sin might be taken away. Why does the believer suffer? That the sin which has been atoned for may be taken away. Jesus Christ suffered to atone for sin, to embitter sin to his people, and endear himself to them above all things; to give a principle of integrity towards God. Let this principle be established in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and we shall be artless as children; open as the day before God, as open as before man fell from innocence. The work of Christ is to bring him back, that God may be enthroned in his affections. The error into which some have fallen in teaching the doctrines of grace, without insisting on the end which God has in view, viz.—the image of God being renewed in the heart of the believer, is most dangerous, and has a tendency only to harden.”

“Unless we study the doctrines so as to make us love the practice of truth, we had better know nothing at all about them. If they have not this

effect, they will be more barren than hell to our hearts.”

“Consider what the word of God does for a sinner. It illumines the understanding ; it warms the heart ; it guides the steps ; it strengthens the weak ; it confirms the strong. The intellect is illuminated by truth, that the same truth may descend into the heart, so that we may not only see with the intellect, but, under the influence of the Spirit of God, feel with the heart, its beauty and excellency. The Bible contains directions for the believer at all times, in all places, under whatever circumstances. What is a proof of friendship but zeal in serving ? If ye love me keep my commandments. We understand the doctrine only in exact proportion as we love the precept ; and what endears the precept, is to see Jesus dying *under* the curse, that he might redeem us *from* the curse. Dwell on this. It forms a motive which, even here on earth, is far more glorious than that which lives in the bosom of an angel.”

“It is sometimes said that sin works for good to the believer. It is an equivocal sentence, and one which ought not to pass without explanation.

Sin being among the things which work together for good, may be so explained. It is sin as imputed to the Saviour—sin as atoned for by the Saviour—sin as repented of by the sinner—sin as triumphed over by faith in the atoning blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ—sin as perused in all its workings in the human spirit: seen in all its machinations with the eye of God—fought against and triumphed over by the arm of Jehovah.”

What he laboured to inculcate and establish on all occasions was principle—principle as opposed to mere profession, and as distinct from feeling. He knew too well how fluctuating the feelings are; and he had witnessed but too much of hollow profession. “Give me principle, give me principle,” he would say; and when once convinced that a principle of integrity was established in the heart, he would never suffer it to be weighed down in his estimation by any inconsistency of conduct, however it was to be deplored—still less by any mere infirmity. The eddies in a river, he said, do not prevent the progress of the main stream to the ocean. And though he would give no kind of encouragement to any thing that did not become

the christian character; and would tolerate no excuse for its wilful indulgence; yet would he rather exhort to rise than reprove for falling. The tenderness with which he treated all whom he believed to be sincere, whatever their infirmities or failings might be, was one of the many lovely features of his character, as well as of his ministry. He said, on one occasion, when hard words were used towards an individual of whom he thought well and very kindly, "I believe the image of God to be on that man's soul; don't strike him."

His ministry was faithful to every part of the truth of God; the whole weight of which was brought perpetually to bear on every subject and every case. It filled every exhortation, every warning, every word of encouragement. And so he never failed to strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; it cheered the drooping, it comforted the afflicted; it gave light by night to these. And were I to point out one instance among many, and above all, in which the ministry of Mr. Howels was peculiarly interesting, it was in his tender expostulations with those who were in a cold backsliding

state—a class of hearers to whom, may I venture to say, that ministers do not usually direct all the attention that is due.

So he preached. Through the ever-shifting scenes of novelty, eccentricity, and superficial brilliancy, by which the attention of the metropolis is liable to be distracted, Mr. Howels maintained his position with steadiness and success: and amidst the glare of those wandering stars, which have recently shed abroad such malignant influence, his own pulpit never ceased to diffuse the light and warmth of those standard truths, which in every age have conducted believers on their way to glory, and honour, and immortality.

His ministry

Was death to sin, 'twas life
To him who mourned for sin;
It kindled and it silenced strife;
Made war and peace within.

The three leading and gigantic errors with which he waged ceaseless war, throughout the course of his labours in the metropolis, were Popery, Socinianism, and Infidelity. The mention of this compels some notice of the part

which he took in transactions, the importance of which is to be perused in their effects, travelling onwards, as they yet are, to their final issue. I refer, of course, to the repeal of the acts—first, against those who publicly impugned the doctrine of the Trinity; secondly, those commonly called the Test and Corporation Acts: thirdly, the Acts which imposed disabilities upon the Papists. I trouble the reader with no observation of my own on either question; but it is due to the memory of Mr. Howels to record the opinions which he expressed.

He deprecated a departure from the purity of the faith of our forefathers, and the integrity of the constitution as identified with it. Fearing no frown and courting no smile from man, he urged the duty, and therefore the wisdom, of adhering to what he considered to be of the very essence of the constitution of England, that those who separated from the church should not bear office in the state. He maintained in its first lustre and simplicity the principle, that England must stand or fall, as she lived in the fear or forfeited the favour of God; and he avowed his conviction, that if ever a country were

known to establish the wisdom of a maxim by departing from it, *stare principiis* will be associated with England, and the memory of her constitution, to the end of time.

During the progress of the bills introduced from time to time for the relief of his majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, Mr. Howels prepared petitions to both Houses of Parliament, which were presented in the name of himself and his congregation. The last of these (1829) is a production of such uncommon vigour of mind and condensed thought, that however familiar it may be to my readers, I cannot fail to insert it in this place.

“ The Petition of the Minister and Congregation of the Episcopal Chapel, in Long Acre, &c.

“ Most humbly sheweth—

“ That your petitioners have long beheld with grief and indignation the ceaseless endeavours of apostate Rome, to invade a constitution which Protestantism has consecrated to religion, to loyalty, and to liberty; and to insinuate herself into the rights and privileges of a church whose doctrines breathe the primitive purity of the christian religion.

“ That your petitioners are grieved to witness a most criminal indifference to the voice of God himself on a

subject vitally momentous to Britain in the present crisis ; and to hear it asserted and re-asserted, that concession to Papists is a measure simply political in its nature and effects ; although a revelation from heaven has long since solved the question ; and demonstrated that Romanism, in the guise of religion, is in reality a conspiracy to invade the prerogative of Jehovah ; to usurp the thrones of kings ; to subvert every government founded in equity : and to debase and enslave the universe, by seducing, corrupting, and demoralizing mankind.

“ That all equitable legislation must emanate absolutely from the Divine Being ; the right of legislating, only as the minister and representative of God, being delegated to man by him who is supreme, ‘ by whom alone kings reign and princes decree justice.’

“ That the respective and reciprocal duties therefore of legislators, magistrates, and subjects, in enacting, enforcing, and obeying human laws, are all necessarily comprised in their common obligations to their great Creator and Governor.

“ That Popery, as opposing itself to the nature, perfections, and truth of the Deity, must necessarily exclude all the positive principles of legislation from the bosom of its votaries ; and render them invariably hostile to every protestant government, in the degree in which it approaches the only model of perfection—the government of God himself.

“ That as a necessary consequence, the human mind, (however eminently endowed by nature, and elaborately cultivated by art,) under the baneful influence of Popery, must be incapable of comprehending the nature, and of appreciating the worth, of liberty, civil, politi-

cal, or religious; invariably confounding it more or less with tyranny, with slavery, and with licentiousness.

“ That as a further necessary consequence, the enemies of the Supreme Legislator, and, therefore, the enemies of all his subjects, as Papists eminently are, (if revelation be indeed Divine,) must be absolutely incompetent to legislate on the imperishable principles of truth and justice, wisdom and benevolence; not solely and exclusively for the enlightened Protestants of the British empire, but even for those who are only emerging into political existence from the barbarism of savage life.

“ That had the advocates of expediency been conversant with legislation, in its nature, origin, and obligations—had they seen how all the principles of true liberty and of good government wholly involve themselves in theocracy, as all the principles of art and science subsist only in the general laws of nature—and had they beheld, in the light of divine truth, the immutably corrupt and mightily elastic spirit of Popery; ignorance and eloquence, genius and folly, had never conspired together to stab the vitals of the country by advocating for the Papists the concession of the elective franchise.

“ That as the legislative errors of others sink into contempt when contrasted with those of Papists, who, if admitted into the British Parliament, and true to their own principles, would vote and legislate, in corporate, systematic and persevering enmity against the spirit of the christian religion; and consequently in ceaseless, subtle, and mighty hostility to the best interests of Englishmen; your petitioners must deprecate, with horror, the awfully anomalous admission of Popish apostacy and Popish misanthropy into the bosom of a British senate, and into the citadel of a regenerate church.

“ That your petitioners deem all reference to the conduct of their forefathers in the ruthless fangs of Popery, struggling only for a portion of secular freedom, on the principles of heathen Greece and heathen Rome, as altogether inapplicable to the shameless and the shameful demands of modern Romanists; for this obvious reason; that their ancestors, in the midst of all their struggles, were themselves the voluntary slaves of spiritual tyranny, and the bitter enemies of liberty in all its original and parental glories; THE LIBERTY OF TRUE RELIGION, INVOLVING IN ITSELF, AND IN ITSELF EXCLUSIVELY, DEITY IN ALL HIS PERFECTIONS, AND HUMANITY IN ALL ITS OBLIGATIONS.

“ That the concession of the elective franchise has not only multiplied the crimes and aggravated the miseries of Ireland; but shaken likewise the very foundations of the glorious British constitution; the majority of Irish votes being virtually at the disposal of a demoralising, disloyal, turbulent, and traitorous priesthood.

“ That the concession of the representative franchise would be productive of further and progressive evils; and enable Romanists either to prosecute a successful crusade for supremacy, or involve the country in all the horrors of a civil war.

“ That the grant of the representative franchise would soon introduce into the British Senate such an influx of members from each side of the channel, as would, by voting together on all occasions of emergency, controul your honourable house and the other estates of the realm; dictate to the ministers of the crown, and force them into any measures they pleased.

“ That as long as Popery (necessarily to preserve its own existence) keeps the Irish peasantry in ignorance and idleness, in crime and wretchedness, the spirit of commercial enterprise and agricultural improvement cannot even breathe among them ; while the best friends of their unhappy country will ever have presented to their view the most heart-rending of all spectacles, *a corrupt religion preying on the human body as well as on the human soul ; murdering at once the blessings of time and the bliss of eternity.*

“ That piety and loyalty, patriotism and humanity, enforce all their demands on the government, the hierarchy, and the people of England, for the spiritual emancipation of the British Slaves of an ARCH IMPOSTOR, (*who, according to the united testimony of Scripture and of fact, is now usurping the throne of God, and trampling to death the sacred liberties of the fairest portion of Europe*) by diffusing from the pulpit and the press, and in every other feasible manner, the whole truth of Scripture, in the vernacular tongue of Irishmen, as well as in the English language.

“ That the most plausible reason ever yet assigned for conceding the representative franchise involves in it a suicidal principle of action so justly and so awfully denounced in Scripture, ‘ *Let us do evil that good may come ;*’ and that all the arguments ever yet adduced by Papists themselves in support of their sacrilegious demands, ignominiously perish in the presence of divine truth.

“ That as the ambition and the cupidity of Papists have never yet ceased to claim an exclusive right to the crown and to the church of England ; and as they are

toiling and smoothing their way to political power, not only to assert, but even to enforce their unhallowed claims—for these momentous reasons, as well as for others far more weighty, Romanism ought to be watched in Britain with more vigilant jealousy than in any other country in the universe.

“ That your Petitioners must embrace the principles of infidelity, and trample under foot the volume of inspiration; or, as the only alternative, in the name of the God they fear, in the name of the King they honour, in the name of the country they love, and in the name of every principle which is or can be dear to them in life, in death, in time, and in eternity, they must protest against any further concession to Papists, not only as *political empiricism, fraught with death to the constitution and calamity to the country*; but above all, (to trace the evil to its origin,) as **LEGISLATIVE TREASON AGAINST THE MAJESTY OF HEAVEN.**

“ That your Petitioners have long beheld with filial sorrow and surprise, what truth is constrained to designate with painful emphasis, the Anti-Constitutional and the Anti-Christian munificence of their conscript Fathers and Protestant defenders, in their annual vote of nearly nine thousand pounds to the Popish College of Maynooth, so religiously and so gratefully devoted by Papists to the purposes of sedition and treason, and to the sublimation of enmity against God and man.

“ That your Petitioners fervently implore the wisdom of your honourable house to deprive the Roman Catholics of Ireland altogether of the elective franchise; to extinguish the Catholic Association; to suppress the Catholic Rent; to visit the ringleaders of agitation with

condign punishment; to withhold all further pecuniary supplies from the College of Maynooth; and to banish the Jesuits (now poisoning the youthful minds of the future legislators and governors of Britain) from every part of his Majesty's dominions; as measures absolutely necessary to chastise and to tame into discipline the hitherto rampant spirit of Popery, and to establish on a firm and permanent basis the peace and prosperity of the whole empire.

“And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray that God will be pleased to direct and prosper all your consultations to the advancement of his glory, the good of his church, and the safety, honour, and welfare of our sovereign and his dominions.”

Some strong expressions on this and other subjects, may be in the recollection of the hearers of Mr. Howels; and which I do not desire to perpetuate: because those who knew him not at all, or but imperfectly, may fail to distinguish between energy of diction and bitterness of feeling. When the measure in favour of the papists was finally carried, Mr. Howels used expressions which have been sometimes quoted against him, as if they were evidence of a vindictive spirit. But he could be little appreciated or understood by any who drew such an inference from what he said. He had no wish

to take vengeance on any. He cherished no bitterness of spirit, no feeling of enmity, towards any one. He used highly wrought, perhaps an extravagant and false figure : I am not defending his taste, but his spirit. All that he designed, was to exhort his hearers, who, with him, deplored the measure that had passed, and the means by which it had been carried—to ride over and rise far and high above all the agents and instruments of the evil that had been accomplished ; and fixing the eye of faith on heaven, pursue their journey thither.

Mr. Howels was zealously attached to the Church of England as a national establishment ; believing that a nobler and a better system has never yet been devised by the wisdom of man for the religious instruction of the people, than that of the division of the whole country into parishes ; with a parochial resident clergyman duly qualified for the charge ; to whom belongs, in that character, the duty of superintending the education of all the poorer members of his flock and their households : and that greater injury could not be inflicted on any, than to give them instruction apart from, and independent of,

divine truth; whether by a rejection or mutilation of the word of God. The folly and the wickedness of such a scheme will be written, as he said, on the disk of the sun to be read with astonishment by the universe of intelligent beings; when the issue and consummation of all the various steps which the legislature has trod shall be found, after every civil and constitutional barrier has given way, in the rejection of God himself.

When the plan was propounded for the education of the poor in Ireland by the aid of a Bible so mutilated as to be alike acceptable to Papists and Protestants, Mr. Howels took part in the public meetings which were vainly held, in the hope of staying a measure so daringly iniquitous; and he prepared a petition against it on behalf of himself and his congregation. It was little more than a protest; for he had learned, as he thought, by experience, the treatment which truth receives at the hands of those to whom the petition was addressed.

It was to the following effect:—

“ That your Petitioners would approach your honourable house as professors of that religion which alone

teaches mankind to regard their legislators and governors as the delegates and representatives of Heaven. That your Petitioners fervently deprecate any national system of education which does not comprise the whole revealed will of God, for the following weighty reasons :

“ That such a system would virtually prefer a charge of folly against infinite wisdom, in having revealed more than was necessary for the temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare, of the human family.

“ That the same system would necessarily involve an attempt to banish God from his human throne, to usurp his government, to curse rather than to bless mankind ; and consequently to provoke the vengeance of Heaven.”

The question relative to the continuance of Socinians in the Bible Society gave rise to some painful discussions ; to at least one very stormy public meeting ; and to a partial disunion in the Society.

Mr. Howels joined with others in objecting to all co-operation with Unitarians. Whether the original constitution of the society were right or wrong, which was the real question at issue, is one of a much more extended nature than was then discussed ; and so, accordingly, it was felt to be, very speedily after the organization of the new society, to which, in the first instance, Mr. Howels gave his zealous support : for at a very

early period after its formation I find him writing in this energetic strain, with reference to other errors than those by reason of which he had recently separated from the Society. "Though not of the committee, I am still a member of the Trinitarian Bible Society for the following reason: I am not disposed to leave either a friend, or a society of friends, till I am spurned into desertion by some veteran and inveterate evil. As a certain grievous error is condemned in the constitution of the society, it must perish in the consistency, piety, and good sense of the committee; otherwise its members will become murderers and suicides.

"Though they may profess to take their stand on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, they will trample under foot the triune Jehovah.

"I would remind the gentlemen of the committee, that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light most insidiously, and that heresy fights the battles of hell most successfully, under the wings of virtue, worth, and piety."

I need not remind the reader, that the error to which allusion is made in this letter was that which occupied much of the attention of Mr.

Howels towards the close of his life : and against which he to the last put forth all his strength ; and strove too, I believe, in a better strength than his own.

Mr. Howels alluded but seldom, and slightly from the pulpit, to the manifestation of tongues ; (as it is called ;) but he lamented deeply the wanderings of some, of whose sincerity he had no doubt ; and he spoke of them frequently in private as the sad consequence of allowing the mind to range beyond the bounds of truth and soberness ; the effects of ministering excitement where restraint was needed ; and of pampering the imagination or the feelings at the expense of the understanding and the heart ; till at length the soul is cast upon a stormy sea, with none to guide her home.

But there were errors of a different and dangerous kind, which Mr. Howels saw to be making fearful progress ; and against which, therefore, he took his stand. Whatever assailed the essential dignity and purity of the person of his Lord wounded him to the quick. In the volume already published is the substance of a sermon which he preached on the humanity of

our Saviour. It is one of about four which he preached on special occasions, and of which he gave previous notice. That sermon will speak for itself; and other remarks on the same interesting subject will be found in the following pages. But I cannot here omit the following letter, though it has already appeared in print.

“ Constrained as I am to treat those who err with yearning tenderness, and at the same time to denude the appalling deformity of error, the following observations will be found (I humbly presume) conclusive as they are concise.

“ *As the covenant of works was made only with the man, the exclusive representative of his own family; the contrasted seed of the woman, the head of the covenant of eternity, was infinitely removed from the representation of Adam, and consequently from the wreck of Eden. The doctrine of the fallen and sinful humanity of Christ is the very essence of absurdity and blasphemy. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

“ Although the Saviour, properly speaking,

did not visit the world to repair the ruins of the fall, (otherwise all would have been saved,) he was made under the law violated by Adam; raising a *pure* from an *impure* nature, to accomplish the high ends of his divine mission. He visited us in the *likeness*, not in the *one-ness* of *sinful* flesh. He assumed the very form and features, not the *colour* of the Ethiopian; and wore them here below, not only in *sinless* weakness, but likewise in *whiter* and in *ruddier hues* than those of *heaven*; till finally, the perfections of his Deity developed all their beauties, and effulged all their glories, in the graces of his humanity, when *Mercy* and *Truth* met together, and *Righteousness* and *Peace* kissed each other; when *Truth* sprang out of the earth, and *Righteousness* looked down from heaven.

“ As the humanity of the Son of God never had a distinct personal subsistence—because of *its union* with the Second Person of the Holy Trinity *necessarily wafting it* to the distance even of his DEITY from the remotest tendency to moral evil—Hence, according to the testimony of Scripture, what is *absolutely* true of him as God of the *essence* of his Father, is *relatively*

true of him as man of the *substance* of his mother. *That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. Truly this man was the Son of God.* COROLLARY—If the *human nature of Christ* was ever *subject* to any tendency to sin, his *Deity* must have been *equally subject* to the same tendency.

“ If any of my dear friends have been betrayed into erroneous views of the manhood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, let me faithfully and affectionately warn them of their danger. They are standing with their heads SWIMMING on the verge of a tremendous precipice.”

The following fragment I found in his own hand-writing.

“ Miracles, had they not ceased, would have eclipsed the glories both of the Old and New Testament ; men and women would have neglected the Bible to go hunting after signs and wonders ; and faith, conversant with sense, would have nestled with the lark in the ground, instead of

soaring with the eagle in the skies, with the family of heaven on her wings. It is the *divine* privilege of modern believers, in the exercise of that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, whether past, present, or future, to converse more sublimely with miracles than those ancients who once witnessed their astonishing realities.

“Having answered their appropriate end in their ONCE new and THEREFORE *surprising effects*, their wonders wisely and mercifully ceased, that the glory of the God who gave them might *survive* in the page of inspiration, to address the immortal spirit rather than the senses of every believer. ‘Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.’ He who has comprehensively considered, and profoundly felt, the internal evidences of the christian religion, would deprecate the intrusion or interruption of a miracle while blissfully engaged in communion with his God.

“To waive at present most of the incontrovertible attestations of divine truth; I would affectionately remind the infidel, that the Lord

addresses his awful responsibility by the medium of his senses in the present state of the Jewish people; involving far greater wonders than all the miracles that the sun has ever beheld.”

I have as yet said nothing, and I am disposed to say very little, on the subject of the millennium. It is one on which good men have differed, and must for a season be content to differ. Mr. Howels maintained very strenuously, what I hope no one will be offended with me for calling, the spiritual view of the subject: it grieved him, he said, to see his friends indulging in millennial speculations, instead of entering at once upon the communion which now exists between God and the soul.

And here I close this notice of the ministry of Mr. Howels: but in so doing, I may be allowed, I hope, to express the gratification which it affords to me, and to many, that the present minister of Long Acre Chapel is of one heart and one mind with him who is gone before; and that from the honoured pulpit of Mr. Newton, Mr. Cecil, and Mr. Howels, which has been for so many years the object of heavenly care, the truth as it is in

Jesus is still preached in simplicity and with power; faithfully, affectionately, and effectually. *Esto perpetua.*

It was the constant practice of Mr. Howels to use extempore prayer, both before and after the sermon; and I need not remind any who listened to those prayers, of their uncommon beauty, fervour, and excellency. But they were not unfrequently surpassed in private, where, in the retirement of domestic life, he would pour forth all his soul. Whatever excellencies he exhibited in public, and they were not a few, there was something in his conduct of family worship so simple, so interesting, so instructive; so full of feeling and affection, and he appeared to be so free from all restraint in it, that perhaps the fondest recollections may yet rest on these scenes. The system of expounding to select parties, made for the occasion, had for him no attractions: it wanted that in which he delighted. There was in him an entire absence of all desire of display; and when any thing in society once assumed the shape of personal exhibition, he was locked in silence. But when alone with a family, to whom he was attached, with servants to whom

he was accustomed, and from whom he had been long used to receive ready and grateful attention ; or when a few select friends gathered round him, he would explain and illustrate Scripture with a simplicity, clearness, and concentration of truth, that surely were never surpassed. During the latter years of his life, he was accustomed, before he began his sermon, to make some comments on the lessons for the day, which afforded him an opportunity not only of explaining a larger portion of texts than could be comprised in a single sermon, but also of enforcing, as he saw occasion, some practical remarks ; a wider range, and, at the same time, the means of a closer application of Scripture, being thus open to him, than the compass of a single sermon on any subject, necessarily limited as it is, could well supply.

I should mention that Mr. Howels proposed, in the first instance, to make his comment upon the lessons of the day as they were read in the course of the service, and he announced his intention of so doing ; to which end he proposed reading the prayers himself. But it being suggested to him that there would be a canonical

irregularity in this mode of proceeding, he abandoned it at once, and adopted the course I have before mentioned, against which no such objection would lie.

Both in public and in private, the familiarity, and at times the exquisite beauty, of his illustrations, formed one of the most interesting parts of his ministry; and I cannot forbear offering a few instances to the attention of the reader.

“THE RAINBOW.—*Genesis* viii. 13, 14.

“To the family of Noah, the gathering of a cloud would be a fearful sight;—charged with the thunder, the tempest, and the deluge, it would have seemed to prepare again all the elements of destruction for a guilty world. But the Lord, in his compassion and mercy, not only gave them his promise that he would not again bring a flood on the earth to destroy all flesh; he established also a token of that covenant, and he fixed his bow in the very elements of vengeance. By his ordinance, the elements of vengeance themselves must refract and reflect the glories of the sun; they are made to divide the prismatic colours of light, and exhibit them in

their distinct and native beauty : and the family of Noah are commanded to fix their eyes on the BOW IN THE CLOUD, that all their fears may be dissipated. We are thus reminded of many interesting and important truths. We look to Calvary, and see the bow fixed in all its splendour upon the blackest clouds of the elements of vengeance ; we see the glories of the Sun of Righteousness reflected there ; we see there the attributes which meet in Jehovah, each resplendent in its own beauty and glory. The elements of vengeance, which burst in all their fury on the head of Messiah, exhibit, to the eye of faith, the bow of the divine perfections meeting and harmonizing for the salvation of guilty man. There ‘mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.’ And thither is the believer continually to direct the eye of faith ; that his fears may be ended, and hope and joy dwell delightfully in his bosom.”

“ EXODUS xii. 1.—*This month shall be to you the beginning of months ; it shall be the first month of the year to you.*

“ Before the institution of the Passover, the Jewish year began in autumn ; thenceforward

it began in spring, Are any of you living in sin, and strangers to the application of the blood of Christ? It is still the autumn of your existence; your summer sun set in Eden. Death will strip you of every idol; and if you die in your sins, a winter of eternal storm awaits you. You who know what it is to eat the paschal Lamb, and feed on him by faith—it is the spring of your existence. Your sun shall never go down. The beams of the Sun of Righteousness shall illumine the dark valley of the shadow of death, and an eternal summer is beyond. Contrast the Israelites, eating the lamb in peace and safety, with the Egyptians mourning the loss of their first-born and their gods. But what is it in comparison with the state of the friends and the enemies of Jehovah when time shall be no more!”

A comment on the whole type will be found in another part of this volume.

As a specimen of the way in which he briefly pointed out the force of a passage—

“PSALM xxxvii 3.—*Trust in the Lord, and do good. Trust in the Lord, and do evil! No. Trust in the Lord, and do nothing! No. Do*

good without trusting in the Lord! None of these will do."

"JOB. i.—*The Lord gave,—stop there, Job! Not for the world,—and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*"

"2 CHRON. xvi. 9.—*The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the earth, to show himself strong, &c.* We sometimes see a mother and child together; the child is playing about the room, the mother is occupied in reading or work, apparently not attending to the child; but the eye is upon it, and if the child is in danger, the arm is ready."

"The prodigal is a beautiful image of the backslider. He left his father's house, he sinned away all his comfort, all his hope; he tried to content himself with the husks of legality, twin brother to licentiousness; but he is compelled to return to his father's house. His father sees him afar off, and runs to meet him; then there is joy. Return then, backslider, return! THE PRODIGAL'S FATHER IS YET ALIVE!"

"LUKE x. 38—42.—Jesus was in the house of a woman named Martha, whose sister Mary sat

at Jesus' feet to hear his word. Martha being cumbered about much serving, busied in the needful preparations, called upon Jesus to reprove her sister; but Jesus answered, 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things,' &c. This tender reproof conveys more than appears at first sight. It conveys a little history of Martha's life; it gives also an insight into Mary's history, the tenor of whose life was continual communion with God. The difference of the two characters did not begin and end with the fact recorded in this story. I do not deny the existence of true religion in the bosom of Martha; but in Mary it existed in a more eminent degree. A superficial observer would have judged differently, and have praised Martha's zealous activity. If Martha's whole soul had been engaged in loving the Saviour while serving him, she would never have thought of reproving her sister. No, she would have said, I know how she is engaged; my heart is with her, even while making the necessary preparations for both, and I will not break in upon her glorious privilege. May we all be individual Marys."

His touching address in behalf of the Dorcas Society (for the relief of poor lying-in women) on a Christmas-day, should not be forgotten. It was all comprised in few words:—
“As on *this day a poor lying-in woman*, in a manger at Bethlehem, gave birth to the humanity of Him on whom all your hopes rest for eternity.”

In one of his earliest sermons in London, he illustrated the conduct of the Christian by that of a man who had partially recovered from dangerous illness, and was on his journey home, attentive to his diet and his beds, not exposing himself needlessly, moderate in all things, and so on. The idea is enough, and may not be new.

A friend of his had a dog, of which Mr. Howels was very fond, and the dog regularly accompanied them as they walked together the short distance that separated the residence of one from the other. One evening the dog strayed, and was taken up by a stranger, who was carrying him off, but he was recovered; and it was observed that ever afterwards, when near the same place, the dog always kept close to his master and his friend. Mr. Howels could not let this

pass unimproved ; and he took occasion to mention it from the pulpit ; accompanying it with an exhortation to his hearers to profit by the example, to bear in mind the deliverances they have experienced, and the dangers they have escaped ; and whenever they again approach the scene of danger and deliverance, to remember that their safety will be found in keeping close to their master. Peter followed afar off and then he fell.

I pause here for a few moments, to notice the charge brought against Mr. Howels, of having set at nought all ecclesiastical authority ; for it is one from which I am anxious that he should be vindicated ; well knowing, as I do, that it is without pretence.

Some of his hearers having taken upon themselves to complain of a statement of doctrinal truth which had been made by him, the next time that he ascended the pulpit he spoke to the following effect :—“ I beg to say, once for all, that I never will suffer this chapel to be turned into a dissenting place of worship ; and that I will not be called to account by my hearers for the doctrines which I preach. If any of you

have fault to find with those doctrines, go to my excellent diocesan, the Bishop of London, and if summoned to appear before his lordship, I shall cheerfully render an account of them."

The real truth is, that no clergyman of the church of England could be, as I believe, more delicately observant of what was due from him to those in authority in the church as well as to his brethren in the ministry, than Mr. Howels. His feeling upon this subject is beautifully expressed by himself in the following passage:—
"The Bishop of London well knows that none of his clergy fear him less and respect him more than myself; thoroughly disposed, as I am, not only to yield to him every obedience within the pale of his own jurisdiction; but likewise to present him with every thing most agreeable to his wishes, within the ample horizon and serene hemisphere of a pure conscience."

To extempore prayer in the pulpit, before or after the sermon, I am not aware that any objection is likely to be made, unless the matter of the prayer were faulty; and against extempore preaching none can lie, except, of course, on the same ground. But Mr. Howels wrote with

painful emphasis when complaining of the way in which his sermons were reported in some periodical publications. "The charge preferred against me is fully substantiated ; for I have been too ill to compose and preach elaborate sermons, to be published afterwards, not for the spiritual but for the temporal profit of others."—He strongly objected to the practice of publishing his sermons, sometimes erroneously reported, and uniformly without his leave.

The following letter was inserted in "The Pulpit," to the editor of which it was addressed.

" SIR,

" I have perused with surprise a sermon reported as mine, in No. 338 of your periodical publication. Thousands of gold and silver would not have seduced me into the press, and thence into the tour of the empire, in the dress I am invested with by your reporter.

"Though the whole of the sermon would have been very different had it courted the public eye from my own pen, I cannot, from bodily indisposition, do more than correct a few pas-

sages, by presenting you with my own undistorted sentiments.

“ *EVE was not a federal head, or the Saviour must have assumed* FALLEN HUMANITY.

“ ADAM was the *exclusive* representative of the whole human family. As we were all included in the covenant of Eden, our individual apostacy must have been considered as involving itself in the violation of that covenant.

“ This is the light in which the awfully interesting subject is viewed by Jonathan Edwards, as well as by several of the most eminent divines. It is self-evident, that the curse of the violated covenant could not penetrate the conscience of any human being, unless armed with his own personal and wilful apostacy.

“ As the moral law, in a symbolical gospel, ruled the ancient Jewish church; the same law, in the gospel of Christ, fulfilled as a covenant by the Lord himself, will govern the christian church for ever.

“ The red heifer, spotless, blemishless, and never yoked, put to death, and afterwards consumed to ashes, for the purification of the un-

clean, typified the incarnate Jehovah in his sufferings here below. As God he could not have worn the yoke of obedience: but as God-man, he became subject to the condemnation, as well as to the command of his Father's law, and loved the holiness of the curse in the midst of all its bitterness.

“ Our eminent reformers were profoundly conversant with the law of God in its federal rigour, and preceptive freedom. ‘ Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.’ In other words; *deliver us from this law as a covenant and devote us to it as a rule.*

“ I disown every thing hitherto inserted in ‘ The Pulpit ’ under my name, and deprecate the future insertion of any thing ascribed to myself.

I remain, Sir,

“ Your very obedient servant,

“ WILLIAM HOWELS.

“ Dec. 22, 1829.”

The extraordinary influence which for a series of years Mr. Howels exercised over a most im-

portant and valuable portion of society, was the more remarkable by the absence of all extrinsic advantages. An obscure and unknown stranger ; speaking in a dialect so strong, as to be in the first instance, and to many, almost a foreign language ; of uncourtly manners ; occupying the most subordinate station in the church ; he had to struggle with the difficulties and embarrassments with which such a situation was necessarily attended. As free from the desire, as he was destitute of the possession of wealth, he had none of those facilities which wealth will always, and within due limitations may, very legitimately, afford. He had no family connexions to command his primary introduction, or to sustain his subsequent influence. He did not appear in the metropolis flushed with academical honours, or decorated with any laurels won on the fields of literature or science. His claims to note were vindicated by no production of recognized talent. Without any one of these advantages, he abashed the pride of learning and the assumption of superiority, by which the unpretending lessons of ministerial piety are too frequently spurned ; and by the Divine blessing on his otherwise un-

aided efforts, he attained an eminence which few have ever reached, and erected a standard of truth, to which men of all ranks deemed it their privilege to resort: while ministers of various denominations, from every part of the kingdom, came to learn wisdom from his lips. To what is this to be attributed?

While, to check the extravagance of our admiration for human talent, we ascribe exclusively to Him, who is the giver of every good and perfect gift, both of nature and of grace, the glory resulting from the exercise of all; it is not inconsistent with this acknowledgment, to view with delight those displays of power and goodness which, originally flowing from him, are seen to shine in his creatures and reflect his glory.

Mr. Howels possessed, in the first place, a mind of uncommon originality and power: associated with the warmest affections, softened and disciplined by a high order of devotional piety. And he directed its energies with most singular simplicity of purpose, to the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls.

The charge which infidelity has often urged, of intellectual weakness, as identified with reli-

gious feeling, is triumphantly repelled in this instance, as it has been by a goodly number of the disciples of the cross in every age ; and that upon which Mr. Howels often insisted, was remarkably exemplified in his own case ; viz. the manifest tendency of religious truth to give energy and expansion, consistency and strength, to all the faculties of the human soul, when consecrated to its service. Hence the remarkable firmness of grasp with which he laid hold of any subject ; and the impressive confidence which accompanied the delivery of the truths he preached : for he taught nothing which he had not profoundly meditated and thoroughly examined in the light of God himself. He had perfect confidence in the exercise of the highest powers of the intellect upon the great truths of the gospel : and while he respected the investigations of genuine philosophy, and modern science as the handmaid of religion, and availed himself of their discoveries for the purposes of illustration, which he did with a force and felicity peculiar to himself ; he treated with absolute and well-founded contempt the speculations of unbelieving science, and the pretensions of

learned scepticism. He knew that in the Bible is to be found that revelation of the character and purposes of the Eternal, which the whole machinery of the universe cannot supply; and which, however it may attest the truth of Scripture, could never have unfolded it to the eye of man. With this conviction deeply established in his mind, he viewed all error in principle, and all vice in practice—whether the vain speculations of philosophy, falsely so called—or the ravings of vulgar infidelity—or the schemes of political empiricism, which would attempt to solve the great problem of human happiness, without regard to its most essential element—or the vagaries of fanaticism—or the vanities, and sin, and woe, with which the earth abounds; as so many practical, though melancholy, illustrations of the truth of God.

Another distinguishing feature in the mind of Mr. Howels was the habit of retired and elevated abstraction.

Though fond of social intercourse, and exquisitely alive to the enjoyment of christian communion, the habit of his mind was to be absorbed in its own contemplations. In the intercourse

of society in general, he could scarcely be engaged in free conversation till he was roused by some topic of powerful interest, which fell in with the current of his own reflections. Metaphysics, as a science taught in books, he had scarcely studied at all; and yet his mind bore much of their peculiar colouring and complexion. He had studied theology, not as a mass of cold and isolated dogmas; but as a collection of living truths, to be welcomed, indeed, and cherished by the understanding, but which must travel in all the greatness of their might into the deep recesses of the human heart. Christianity he regarded not only as the brightest emanation of the love of God, but as the most powerful instrument of his moral government.

It is perhaps to be regretted, that a continued state of ill-health, and a constant succession of public duties, prevented him from bringing his powers to bear upon the public mind, through the medium of the press. The prose productions which he has given to the world are indeed exceedingly few and brief; but they suffice to show of what he was capable.

The fragments which are now offered to the

christian world, can afford only an inadequate picture of his mind, and still more of his character; exhibiting, for the most part, the eloquence of ideas rather than of words. Imperfect, however, as they are, they contain much of what is devout in feeling, elevated in sentiment, profound in thought, and beautiful in illustration. It will be borne in mind that they are strictly of a ministerial and pastoral character; and therefore the variety of topics which is found in such a work as the Remains of Mr. Cecil, is not to be expected here. I will make no comparison between them in any other respect. Indeed, the character of the mind of Mr. Howels, of his habits and pursuits, his train of thought, and his whole ministry, were so unlike those of other men, as to admit of no fair comparison between them. But in originality of conception; in occasional bursts of striking and felicitous illustration; above all, in the clear and harmonious exhibition of divine truth; and in the depth of theological attainment and spiritual experience; I know not where we shall seek, without seeking in vain, for one that can bear a comparison with the subject of this Memoir.

In the manner of delivering his sermons, Mr. Howels was, as in all besides, artless and earnest ; commonly energetic, not unfrequently vehement—though when he preached best, he was I think uniformly calm ; when otherwise, it was evident that an effort was required to overcome a pressing infirmity.

In his style of preaching, Mr. Howels was didactic, sententious, aphoristic, familiarly pastoral, not drily logical—teaching, enforcing, and illustrating truth, and that most faithfully and affectionately ; but rather depositing ideas in the mind as distinct propositions, than discussing them in the regular course of detailed and elaborate argument. Himself not needing the intermediate steps, or familiar with that which he had followed out in secret meditation, he frequently arrived at results for which a hearer was not prepared : and as the character of his preaching was not to amplify a subject, by placing it in a variety of lights, but to dive into its depths and return no more to the surface ; the statements which he made were at times somewhat startling, and required the consideration which they well repaid.

There was in him nothing artificial, and but seldom any thing elaborate. His skill did not consist in turning the wealth of others to good account, but in giving full effect to that which was his own.

He used to say, that the excellence of preaching consisted in giving a new interest to truisms ; an observation which at once depicts and illustrates the character of his ministry : but it is to be remembered, that these truisms were, in his estimation, any thing but what would be ordinarily so considered. What he meant, was truth resolved into its first principles, not commonplace deductions from it.

It was justly remarked by Mr. Melvill in his sermon preached the day after the funeral, One of his paragraphs would have made another man's sermon. His ideas were great ideas, and when they struggled forth in their naked and unadorned grandeur, there was a nervousness in his speech, which vastly more than compensated the want of the beauties of a highly polished diction.* He required to be heard often, to be duly ap-

* Yet there were occasionally passages in his sermons of uncommon beauty, on the composition of which he had plainly bestowed great care.

preciated. He was a preacher, who, of all others, grew upon his hearers. The stranger, who came once, might go away disappointed. But each succeeding time he would be admitted so much further into the mind of the speaker, that he would quickly refer his disappointment to his own want of discernment. His health through many years was so weak and interrupted, that he could give but little time to the writings of divines. Hence he rather thought for himself than gathered in the thoughts of others. An inferior man thus debarred from companionship with authors, would have grown common-place and meagre in discourse. He, on the contrary, drew perpetually on his own resources; and in place of exhausting seemed only to enlarge them.

It was seldom that he could be heard without the hearer being gratified by some rich truth exhibited in a form that stamped it on the memory. On one occasion, which will be in the recollection of others as well as my own, he failed altogether. He was less accustomed, at that period, than afterwards, to preach from notes; and as he expressed it, with deep emotion at the time,

suffering as he was from sickness, all that he had intended to say was wiped from his memory. His text upon that occasion was the passage, "Enter ye in at the strait gate," &c. Having endeavoured in vain to collect his scattered thoughts, he dismissed the congregation, intreating them to pray for him. Yet, though there was on that evening but a single sentence of a sermon, that sentence was worthy to be remembered then, and recorded now. "The gate is wide enough to admit any sinner, too narrow for the admission of any sin."

But besides, and above all that has yet been mentioned or could be said of his intellectual power, or superadded attainments, that which gave such extraordinary effect to his preaching, was the warmth with which it poured like life-blood from the heart. His whole soul was in it. His ministry was pervaded throughout by that sincerity of heart, simplicity of purpose, and entire freedom from affectation and guile, which marked his character and adorned his life. It was this which especially endeared him to his congregation, and drew towards himself the best feelings of their hearts.

Much as might be said of his character as a man, and much as I have pondered it, I feel that I can give only a faint and feeble outline of what he was. It is the less needful to do more, because, though a ministerial character is in some degree the property of the public, the other belongs more particularly to private friends. Something, however, the world is entitled to know; and something more is due as a tribute of private affection. But if I had the power of doing either, I should rather draw a quiet portrait than write a warm eulogy: and as I hope, that some idea of what he was will have been gathered from the whole course of the preceding narrative, I shall briefly touch upon some of the leading points in his character. In this, uncompromising integrity of principle was the great moral feature. It was prominent in childhood, and experienced no decay in after life, from his intercourse with a world of falsehood and fraud. On the contrary, it should seem that in the proportion as his acquaintance with it increased, this principle gathered strength: growing with his growth and strengthening with his strength. It is quite needless to descend into details of conduct to illustrate this.

He was a man, I must repeat, of singular sincerity, simplicity, and freedom from guile. He lived above the world while passing through it. In my intercourse with my fellow creatures—and I have seen more than a little of many in my journey through life thus far—I have known few, if any, who had acquired so little of the spirit of the world as Mr. Howels—none, I think, who had less: and yet it has been my privilege to know, and to be connected with, some of the brightest ornaments of either sex, in whom this characteristic has shone forth with peculiar lustre. With this must be connected the entire absence of all affectation, whether it assume the shape of pedantic assumption, vanity, or pretence of any kind.

Mr. Howels was a singularly generous man: not generous only in the disposition to relieve the wants of others, though this was one of its fruits; but in a higher and more comprehensive meaning of the term. There was, indeed, nothing little about him. He was generous in forgiving; he knew not what it was to cherish a vindictive spirit; to retain a latent grudge, or a lurking recollection of any wrong. The prin-

ciple which he inculcated on all occasions, and which he recommended to others not more by exhortation than by his example, formed upon the model of that which is divine, was *full and free forgiveness*.

“ Being determined to pacify an individual whose feelings I had once thoughtlessly lacerated,” (he should rather have said unintentionally, for I know to what he referred,) “ I told him,” he said, “ without one qualifying clause, that I begged to be forgiven. He reviewed my conduct with all the eyes of affection; and the wound I had inflicted was immediately and thoroughly healed. He is now more my friend than ever.”

If men would but be persuaded to go and do likewise, the aspect of every thing around us would be very different to what it is.

Now, to estimate his character aright in this respect, two things must be remembered; first, that the natural temper of Mr. Howels was any thing rather than favourable to the exercise of this grace; and secondly, that it was from no want of ability to make others feel, that he returned, as he always did, a kiss for a blow. Let

one instance suffice:—When asked why he did not read the writings of Mr. Irving and his followers, he replied that it was not necessary to read their writings; he had gone deeper,—he had read the writers. The man who made that answer could be at no loss for a weapon, had he been disposed to use it at any time. Perhaps there is nothing which more evinces the beauty and the strength of christian principle, than its triumph over the pride of nature, when, under circumstances of provocation or insult, one, like Mr. Howels, who has the power to wound, forbears to strike. But, as he beautifully said of himself, “experience has, by the divine blessing, so disciplined my naturally proud spirit, as to teach me an invaluable lesson,—the art of bending sweetly and affectionately wherever I conscientiously can, leaving all consequences with Him who is infinite wisdom as well as infinite love.” I must be pardoned if I dwell yet a little longer upon this part of his character, which, indeed, might be so illustrated and extended, as to include almost the whole.

He would listen to no idle tales to the preju-

dice of another, and uniformly discouraged it as much as possible. But when (as, of course, frequently occurred) his counsel was asked in difficult circumstances, or reference was made to him to mediate between parties at variance, offending or offended, I have reason to know that nothing could surpass the delicacy and discretion which he evinced. He laboured unremittingly, and spared no pains to accomplish a reconciliation; and when that was once attained, he bid adieu to the subject for ever; it was never named or alluded to again, but was as though it had never been. How well he knew the human heart!

Several instances of his conduct in this respect have reached me from various quarters; and one little anecdote I must be permitted to relate. Two persons, I believe a husband and wife—but of that I am not sure, and it matters not—being very much at variance, referred their quarrel to him. Each accused the other, and both declared themselves to be without blame. Mr. Howels heard them very patiently, and then he said, “My judgment is this: Let the innocent

forgive the guilty." And surely a wiser judgment has not been given since the Saviour was on the earth. I could easily enlarge upon this part of his character; but it is not necessary. What a comment upon all is contained in the single sentence in his will, which fell from his dying lips: "I remit all that is due to me from every quarter!"

In the inscription on the tablet erected to his memory, it is truly said, that his character was marked by delicacy of feeling and warmth of affection. And Mr. Melvill formed a most correct opinion of him when he said in the sermon which I must quote again and again, As a friend, I hold him to have been unrivalled. You always felt yourself safe with him; and those who have experienced the hollowness of ordinary intimacies, will know how to appreciate the remark. There was indeed uncommon delicacy of feeling in Mr. Howels; ever watchful of the wants and wishes of those around him, while at the same time he was just as assiduous to conceal the watchfulness. He was distinguished in private life by an amiableness and simplicity which endeared him to all with whom he asso-

ciated. He had the sensitiveness of a noble and generous spirit; and his high and rich delicacy of feeling rendered him as averse from a mean thing, as his deep holiness from a sinful thing. It is not less true, that he singularly resembled his Lord, of whom it is justly observed to have been one beautiful characteristic, that he had no false shame: he was absolutely free from it. It was a maxim with him, which he exemplified in his life, that nothing is degrading to man but that which is morally wrong.

In a former part of the Memoir, I made some allusion to his deficiency in taste; and as this is not unconnected with that particular portion of his character which is before me, I again refer to it; for it has been misrepresented in its nature, and exaggerated in its extent.

In taste, as associated with feeling, and dependent upon it, he was not only not deficient, but was remarkable for it. Where he was defective, was in refinement; owing, I apprehend, to the want of education, and of early association with persons of cultivated minds. He had a very proper contempt for all false delicacy, and knew that, in too many instances, truth has fallen a

sacrifice to it. But it is not to be denied; that at times, in “dealing a death blow” to false delicacy, true delicacy has been wounded. This I admit; but what gratification it can have given to any to perpetuate these instances, and record such expressions, I am at a loss to conjecture; or why it should have been done, unless it were with the design of showing how that which, in Mr. Howels, was a want of refinement only, may, in another, be attended with a want of feeling also. It will be found, as I believe, that delicacy of feeling is usually an accompaniment of high intellectual powers. Both were associated in Mr. Howels with a high tone of spirituality; and when to these we add the tenderness and sympathy to which I have before alluded; the integrity and generosity, sincerity and simplicity of which I have said a little; and the humility, of which I might say much,—I am almost startled at the character which is presented to our view. But there is no thread of fiction in it; neither is it in any degree highly coloured or overcharged.

Beyond all this, however, there were features in his character that may not be overlooked. Of

these, and in perfect harmony with all that I have described, high moral courage was one. He was naturally a bold man—to fear in any bad sense, that is to say, to every thing like cowardice or pusillanimity, he was as entirely a stranger as any one I ever knew. And surely I need not say that he was warm and constant in attachment to his friends. Of these he gathered many around him; and remembering, as I do, what he was upon his first arrival in London, and the treatment which he then experienced, it is pleasing to reflect (not so much for his sake assuredly as for others) that he lived to be known, and valued, and caressed; and that, not by persons in an humble sphere alone, or by minds of an inferior order, but by many exalted in station, and distinguished in talent—of cultivated minds, and most polished manners. That some singularity of behaviour, which accompanied him at an early period, had disappeared, and that some rough edges had been softened down, it is most true; but the original and sterling simplicity of his character was never changed: to use a plain but very intelligible word, he was in no degree spoiled by his intercourse with

the great. He courted them not at all—he was sought by them, and sought them not. He knew well, under the influence of the principles which lived in his bosom, how to give honour to whom honour was due; neither affecting to despise their attention to him, nor presuming upon it. He never forgot the true dignity of his character as a christian minister; and in him was seen a remarkable instance of the power of christian principle and christian feeling, joined unquestionably to an intellect of high order, to guide a man aright in all circumstances, and fit him for every station. I must add, that his intercourse with the rich and the noble, which contributed to the comfort of his latter days, in no degree weaned him from earlier friends, or weakened his attachment to them. He continued moreover to the last to dwell with the excellent and pious widow, with whom he lodged after the death of her husband, in a humble and retired situation.

I notice only a single characteristic more, and that as it is described by Mr. Melvill, one of whose sentences on concluding his sketch of the character of Mr. Howels shall then be mine.

“ He was a keen observer of men’s actions, so

that he possessed a fund of anecdote which seemed to be quite inexhaustible. In relating these anecdotes he followed regularly the apostle's maxim, 'Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt.' There was natural humour, so that none could help listening—there was spiritual application, so that all might be improved."

Such was the man. Oh! how imperfectly drawn, how feebly sketched! I have furnished nothing but outlines, and those only rude and scanty. But even these outlines give the portraiture of an uncommon being, uncommon as a man, uncommon as a Christian. We sorrow not as others who have no hope.

It remains now only to tell of his departure: and in so doing I could, under any circumstances, have little to say beyond what was communicated to Mr. Melvill at the time, preparatory to the sermon which he preached. But as all such details are necessarily of greater interest, and are calculated to produce the most salutary effect, when the blow has just fallen, and the best feelings of the heart are open at every pore; and as they belong to relatives, to friends, and to a

congregation, to whom they are already known rather than to the world at large, I shall not enter into them with any minuteness; and in what I think it necessary to say, I adopt, for the most part, the narrative already given.

Mr. Howels officiated in his chapel, with his usual power and fidelity, on Sunday, the 11th of November, 1832; on the evening of which day he preached his last sermon, on the 7th verse of the 87th Psalm. He spent a considerable part of the following Tuesday with a friend, who, having been ill, was then to him an object of peculiar attention. His state of mind on that day was remarkably calm and spiritual; his conversation unusually interesting and instructive. He experienced some oppression on the chest that evening, from which he sought relief by opening the window of his bed-room: it remained open during the night. On the following day there were evident symptoms of the complaint which bore him rapidly away; and the active measures, to which recourse was subsequently had, were then wanting. He arose from bed, being anxious to preach the weekly lecture on that evening, but he was unable so to do;

and, remaining at home, he, at the hour of family worship, read the 39th Psalm, which came, I believe, in due course. On the following day he was bled. What might have been the immediate effect of earlier bleeding may be doubtful; but it is a melancholy satisfaction to have ascertained that, independently of the overwhelming inflammation which cut short his life, there was so much of feebleness and failing in the vital organs, that even had the mortal disease been arrested, the remnant of his days would have proved no blessing to himself. It seems probable that he could not much longer have continued his ministerial labours; and God loved his servant too well to allow him to be detained from rest when he was disqualified for toil.

On Thursday (the 15th November) the disease rapidly gained ground, and in the evening of that day additional medical advice was called in. The remark he made to the physician was quite characteristic: "See the effects of sin." He never lost sight of that. The approach of death was manifest, and on the following day the case was hopeless. On that day he dictated his will, bequeathing the chief part of the little that he had to

leave, to the Church Missionary Society. He was careful to enumerate whatever he had in his possession belonging to other persons; and he remitted all that was due to himself from every quarter. The will concludes with these words—“My mind is calm.” This was in the immediate prospect of death, for that he was then dying he was well assured. During the whole of Saturday he may be said to have been in the grasp of death. At times he appeared to be distressed; and some circumstances might be named which were of a trying kind. But he was not overcome. He had an abiding assurance of his safety, so that he could view the approach of death without alarm: he saw death in its full dimensions. and saw it without dismay; but though there was no terror, there was assuredly no trifling. Suddenly attacked with a disease that was hurrying him into eternity, in almost the prime of manhood, and the full vigour of all his faculties, he felt that it was a solemn, if not an awful thing to die: it was not the triumph of feeling, but of faith over feeling. “Guilt,” he said, “is removed from my conscience, and I leave these feelings.” On a

calm review of every circumstance attending the last illness, and the death of Mr. Howels, I say in all seriousness and in all sincerity, that nothing could be more satisfactory than the state of his mind at that season; nor could I now desire it to have been, in any respect whatever, other than what it was.

In the afternoon of his last day of mortality, it was evident to his medical attendants that the final change was at hand. His favourite physician, who is eminent for the union of science and piety, felt it then his duty to endeavour to produce a reaction in the system; and therefore brought to bear upon the heart the physical and intellectual powers of his patient. Involving in what he said an allusion to the disease, he spoke to him of that double life, the animal and the spiritual, which God breathed into man at his first creation. "Yes," said the dying man, startled from the creeping lethargy, and recalling his acquaintance with the original of the Scriptures, "he breathed into him the breath of lives." Mind triumphed for a while over matter; and the rally of the sinking powers was singularly fine. The physician went

on to speak of man as a once beautiful mirror, reflective of Godhead: he admitted that the mirror was broken into shivers, but pleaded that in the fragments might still be found faint traces of the original. The dying man kindled with something of his former fire. He gathered up his declining energies, and thus annihilated the argument. "It reminds me," he said, "of the anecdote of a tiger, who, pursuing his prey, entered a house, and encountered a mirror, which, reflecting his image, he dashed it to pieces in springing upon his supposed enemy: but seeing in every fragment a tiger, he fled affrighted from his own multiplied likeness." This was the parting blow which he gave the natural man—from every fraction of the mirror is reflected the image of Satan. Being relieved, by expectorations from the bronchi, of the mucus which oppressed those tubes, he expressed his sense of the comfort; but shewed immediately the bent of his thoughts by saying, "The soul too has its air-tubes, but they are choked by sin and Satan." The physician's purpose was answered; the heart of his patient was roused, and the general pressure on the system for a while lighten-

ed. Conversation then turned on the fourteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel. Mr. Howels took up the subject, and beginning at the text, "In my Father's house are many mansions—I go to prepare a place for you"—he thus commented on them. "Yes, our Lord says, 'You have been an outdoor servant long enough; I will now make you an indoor servant, and take you out of the wind and rain, to give you a glorified body and better wages and a better mansion.'"

From the time that the physicians took their leave on Saturday afternoon, as indeed at an earlier period, and almost throughout his illness, Mr. Howels expressed a wish to be alone. When in want of any thing he called to the attendants in the next room; but as soon as the want was supplied he again desired to be left. It is the testimony both of medical and clerical experience, that individuals on a death-bed, ordinarily cling to society, and shrink from solitude. With worldly persons this is decidedly the case, and partially with believers. Few souls are so detached from earth as to want nothing but God to lean upon. Who can tell the high communing

which, in this his chosen loneliness, he held with his Saviour? During the last night of his life, he is believed to have been much engaged in prayer, in his native tongue : the sounds were not articulate, but enough was heard to lead to this conclusion ; at all events, it is quite clear that God was every thing to him : he needed not, and he sought not, the help of man. Alone with Deity, he pressed on to Paradise. About three hours before his death, in answer to the inquiry of a friend, whom he had desired to see, he expressed, in his own peculiar manner, a consciousness of his security ; “ Fully for eternity ;” adding, after a pause, and in a lower tone, “ I should be travelling beyond the bounds of the promise if I sought more for time.”

To the very last he was singularly clear and collected. He pronounced a blessing on those who were present with him—expressed his desire to lie passive in the hands of the Lord—and in all tranquillity, unruffled and unassailed, between four and five on the morning of the Sabbath, he slept in Jesus.

The spirit was gone ; but upon his face, in death, there was a smile, that seemed to tell of unearth-

ly peace and joy. Indeed, as was said by one who looked upon it, it was very lovely clay.

These remains were on the 24th of November buried in a vault under the church of the Holy Trinity, in Cloudesley Square, Islington: and why in that spot may and ought to be explained.

The house in which Mr. Howels lodged is situate within Bridewell precinct, the burying ground for which is within the walls of that hospital; and it was not deemed to be in any respect a desirable place: the chapel in Long Acre, (unconsecrated like many other chapels of ease,) is in the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields; and that from the excellent Rector of that parish every kindness would have been experienced I do most readily acknowledge; nothing could be desired beyond what Dr. Richards has at all times done, and shewn a readiness to do. But beyond the mere circumstance of locality, there was nothing to connect the chapel or the congregation, or Mr. Howels as their minister, with that parish; and the then somewhat unsettled state of its large cemeteries, with the prospect of their new arrangement, discouraged the idea of

depositing the honoured remains of Mr. Howels there.

In this perplexity an offer was made by Mr. Fell, the minister of Trinity Church, which was not only desirable in itself, but came recommended by a variety of circumstances, together with an expression of such feeling on his part, as would almost alone have insured its acceptance. It was that of a place in the minister's vault, wherein never man before was laid. Mr. Fell was himself, in every spiritual sense, a brother in the same ministry; and it happened that both the churchwardens had been previously members of Mr. Howels' congregation.

There, on the day already mentioned, the body was buried; a large portion of the congregation, with several clergymen, voluntarily attending. The whole scene was solemn, interesting, and affecting in no ordinary degree. On the following day two sermons were preached in the chapel in Long Acre: the one by Mr. Melvill, from which I have made so many extracts; the other by the Honourable B. Noel: independently of other considerations, they were in a measure pointed to by Mr. Howels himself; for

in his will he had bequeathed to each a set of books. Of Mr. Noel, ministerially, Mr. Howels entertained a high esteem ; and to this was added, in the case of Mr. Melvill, a warm feeling of personal affection.

Of the sensation produced by the death of Mr. Howels in the metropolis, and throughout the kingdom, it were vain to tell. I was little aware myself, till then, of the extent to which he had become known, and, being known, was honoured.

A tablet to his memory has been placed in Trinity Church, at the expense of the individuals whose names are in the list which I subjoin : and the following is a copy of the inscription :—

“ To the memory of the Rev. William Howels, a native of Llwynhelyg, in the county of Glamorgan. and seventeen years minister of the Episcopal Chapel in Long Acre, whose remains are deposited in the vault beneath.

“ His character was marked by strength of intellect, delicacy of feeling, and warmth of affection. His ministry evinced a profound acquaintance with the wants of man in contrast with the infinite perfections of God.

“Alike upholding the sovereignty and authority of the Creator, and the ceaseless responsibility of the creature; he exhibited the glories of the triune Jehovah in the freedom of the covenant of grace.

“Faithfully enforcing the indissoluble connexion of happiness with holiness, and of misery with sin, he boldly reprov'd error in principle and in practice. Illustrating the harmony of the Divine perfections in the salvation of a sinner; he encouraged the fearful, comforted the feeble-minded, supported the weak.

“Free from guile, he walked in humility before God—in simplicity and sincerity among men. Having his conversation in heaven, he experienced in life the power of the truths he taught; and realized, in the approach of death, the full value of his last lesson to his flock—that all their springs must be in Jesus.

“He died on the 18th day of November, 1832, in the fifty-fifth year of his age.”

Thus lived and thus died William Howels. And though I could have wished, that it had fallen to some other hand to record the circum-

stances of his life, and to depict his character ; it would be more than idle affectation to pretend, that I have not been gratified by preparing this tribute of affection to his memory.

Without adding a word as to its imperfections, I commit it to the kind hands and indulgent hearts of those for whom it has been chiefly written ; and by whom I know that it will be received in the spirit, and for the sake, of him of whom it tells.

His memory is now a trust committed to their care ; that they may exhibit in the simplicity of their lives the purity of the truths he taught.

They are to follow him as he followed Christ ; that they may spend with him a rejoicing eternity.

They are to remember his counsel, and imitate his example ; lest, having been highest in privilege, they should be lowest in judgment.

SUBSTANCE OF SERMONS.

“ Before the day was I am he, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. I will work, and who shall let it ?”

The subject to be considered in these words is, the sovereign will and pleasure of a covenant God, manifested in every blessing conferred on his church till she is safe with him in glory.

I. Consider first the creation of God.

He who exists from eternity *must* be God. HE called all things into existence ; the sun, the moon, the stars, and all creatures ; all beings above and all below. There is something in the planet we inhabit ; a glory attending it that is infinitely greater than in any other world of his creation. It was destined to be, first, the theatre of human redemption, that it might subsequently be the theatre of human salvation ; for man is saved from his sins even here. God called this globe and its inhabitants into existence primarily to unfold his glory in the salvation of ruined man : and as a necessary consequence, in the destruction of his enemies ; for every truth of the gospel ; the covenant of God ; the blessings of salvation ; all become the occasion of more aggravated condemnation to those who perish. “ He hath made all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil.” A text which has perplexed many ; but we may adopt an easy principle of solu-

tion which will annihilate the difficulty. God called them into existence, and gave them every thing necessary to render them accountable beings, visiting them individually with rich sovereign blessings; and millions of them have heard the gospel exhibited in all its glory. The creation of God embraced nothing more than an accurate foresight of rebellion and its subsequent punishment. He will present his enemies at the last day with a striking contrast, to show that man has the source of sin and misery exclusively in himself; and that God has the source of holiness and bliss in his own bosom exclusively: "the wicked for the day of evil." In punishing them, he will prove them to have been the authors of their own sinfulness from first to last; he will fix this awful truth in his own light in the conscience of the delinquent, and keep it there for ever. Their condemnation will be to them, indeed, a day of evil; but a day of bliss to the family of God. Their condemnation will indirectly promote the bliss of his people, whose hearts will ascend to God in songs of grateful praise for ever. The burden of the song will be, the grace that has made them different here, and the glory that makes them so for ever.

II. The preservation of all things is from God. "O Lord, thou preservest man and

beast." Is he the creator of all things? It is equally true that he is the preserver of all things. It has been justly observed, that the preservation of all things by God, is neither more nor less than a ceaseless energy of creative power. He was under no obligation to call any being into existence: properly speaking, he is under no obligation to preserve even the most glorious in a state of existence. If he has obliged himself by engagement and an oath, then the obligation, primarily considered, is to himself. Humiliating truth!—and yet a rich truth, and one in which its possessor will delight and triumph for ever. Our reformers felt convinced of this, when they taught us to bless God for creation and *preservation*.

III. The truth of the text appears in the providence of God. The providence and the grace of God are involved in each other in the present dispensation, as far as the church of God is connected with things of time and sense: they were involved in each other in the purpose of eternity. God does not take his family partially, but wholly under his care: all their concerns, without the exception of any the most minute, are in the hands of God continually. We sometimes act a foolish and presumptuous part, in endeavouring to interpret the providence of God

too soon. Shades of ignorance are intentionally thrown over the present economy, to bring principle to the most interesting test; and to lead on the family of God till they are perfect as God is perfect, and holy as God is holy. Admitting trials, distresses, calamities, and chastisements, in the providence of the Almighty, I would ask a question interesting to every Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile,—“Can any state of things be better adapted to bring integrity to the test, and to ripen and make meet for the inheritance of the saints in light? Could any state be better adapted to make us conformed to the image of our dear Redeemer?” All the graces of his humanity were carried to the most glorious perfection in the midst of the afflictions he experienced here below. Welcome then affliction, if God be in it. Let only his presence be with us in the midst of trials, and though earth and hell combine against us, we shall be as secure in the hands of a covenant God as if we were in heaven.

The providence of God is peculiarly interesting to the believer. All its blessings are purchased for us in and by the death of Christ. We had forfeited every thing. No good could have reached us, had it not been for the interposition of a divine person. Therefore our Lord says, “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will

I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." Why in his name? Is it the name of an absolute God? No—in the name of a dying, rising, triumphant Saviour.—“ Give us this day our daily bread.” What a holy, rich, and delightful use does the believer make of this, when, in communion with his God, he sits down to his daily food, remembering that it is furnished for him at the expense of Deity. The same truth is proved from another passage in Scripture. “Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” Need I tell you that this sacrifice was but a type. If we lived under the influence of this salutary truth, we should be more like our Lord and Master, when he was on earth. Pity those who are strangers to true religion; pity and pray for them; they possess nothing worthy to be called happiness or even pleasure.

The preservation of the saints of God in Scripture is striking. He frequently interposed mira-

cles to save his family. It is needless to refer to the history of the Israelites of old—of Daniel, of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and others. The lesson taught us by these things is, that God is perpetually interposing by his providence in behalf of his church. The miracles wrought for the saints of old were not intended for their exclusive use; but for the benefit, instruction, and encouragement of the church to the end of time.

IV. In the sacrifice of Calvary, we behold sovereign will and pleasure shining supremely. There we find every thing in Deity; more than hell was present there; and more than heaven too; more than the vengeance which inhabits hell, and more than the love which inhabits heaven, if we confine ourselves to finite being. What took place previous to the sacrifice on Calvary? The Father had covenanted in eternity to invest his Son with humanity; the Holy Spirit had covenanted to call this humanity into existence. Hence the substitution and voluntary sacrifice of a divine person. See the sovereignty of God, in all its glory, imputing to the Saviour the sins of his family, and visiting him with all the penal evil due to us. Here we see all the sovereignty of God. What took place on Calvary within the human bosom? Humanity having incurred the debt of Eden,

humanity must pay the last farthing on Calvary. The Father was present in the centre of the bosom of his Son in all the terrible glories of his vengeance, demanding every thing at his hands which was due from us. The Holy Spirit was there strengthening the Son to meet the Father, and attaching and devoting him to his Father and his family, in exact proportion as he felt the horrors and the torments of our curse. Nowhere else do we find the perfections of God thus unfolding themselves. Stupendous truth, overwhelmingly rich and delightful! Deity unfolding himself in the bosom of humanity; presenting his church with a full development of all his perfections in a human bosom like ours, sin only in its pollution being absent: "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Mark again. All the glories of his vengeance were only subservient to his sovereign will and pleasure in the salvation of his family for ever. We need not wonder at the effects of the gospel exhibiting to sinners a crucified Saviour. We need not wonder that the great apostle of the Gentiles determined to know nothing among those he addressed, but Jesus and him crucified. Show me Jesus, and I have every thing. Let your first prayer be, Give me an interest in Jesus Christ; may he be mine for ever. Waste

not much time in praying for earthly things ; use this simple, short, sublime, comprehensive petition, and you ask for every thing that God has to bestow ; for it is impossible to give the Saviour without giving every thing that is good. When he enters the human heart, he brings every blessing with him. The individual who is thus blessed, has every temporal good handed to him by the Saviour himself, who will remind him continually, “ This was purchased for you by my sufferings on Calvary.” The idea of a divine person bearing our curse—one divine person punished by another divine person—fills the hosts of heaven with joy unspeakable and full of glory ; and we find that the triumphs of his humanity form the burden of their song.

V. His sovereign will appears in the ministry of the gospel, even where it is rejected. Sovereign blessings, involving all the glories of infinity and eternity, are proffered to every one who hears the gospel. This truth ought to be kept in view. Are we to suppose that God mocks transgressors ? Is he like man, dealing in hypocritical or unmeaning compliments ? No ; he addresses every one who hears the gospel, and invites and commands all to come to him. There is something which must endear all the divine perfections to every believer in the command of

Jesus to his disciples to preach the gospel to every creature; *first at Jerusalem*, to the Jews who had been engaged in crucifying him. The divine perfections, in the light of this truth, become peculiarly interesting. Many of the Jews believed, but the greater part rejected the gospel. (Acts xiii. 45, 46.) How terrible, then, their condemnation at the last day! One awful fact will live in their memory through the countless ages of eternity,—We rejected the gospel; we rejected all that God could do for us. The gospel was preached to us; we shut our hearts against the Son of God. The consciousness of having rejected a great good, even on earth, by our own folly, fills us with uneasiness. The aggravated condemnation of those who reject the gospel will not arise from any arbitrary decree of God. It is painful to be obliged to dwell on the awful consequences of sin, and of neglecting so great salvation: but, as of old, so now—“By the terrors of the Lord we must persuade men.” But have we no other argument? have we nothing but terrors? Yes—we contrast the “terrors” with the joys of the Lord—with the bliss of the covenant, first here, and then for ever. We behold all the divine perfections that developed themselves in the bosom of the Saviour on Calvary, visiting the sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, and bringing him back to God. This sub-

lime truth will teach us our own ruin more effectually than if we could visit even hell itself.

There are difficulties in the divine perfections, and difficulties in the human bosom—these must all be removed, or God and man cannot be reconciled. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ removed all the difficulties on the part of Deity: they live exclusively in the human bosom; and the Holy Spirit has covenanted from eternity to remove them from the hearts of his people. He visits them dead in trespasses and sins, and bids them live for ever in the life of God. Thus the covenant offices of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in their fulfilment, annihilate all difficulties in Deity and humanity. They bring the vilest sinners to God, and usher them into his richest friendship. “I will work and who shall let it?” Thanks be to God for this: one who knows his own heart knows that nothing less could induce him to come to God. This is usually called *irresistible* grace; but it would be more properly termed *invincible*. It is resisted again and again, but, thank God, it is invincible. “By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”—“Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation,” “they shall not be ashamed or confounded, world without end.”

To apply the subject—and may the application reach the inmost recesses of every heart.

1st. The sovereign pleasure of God banishes no sinner from him—this is the exclusive work of the transgressor. It is impossible that it should be the work of any other. As I live, saith the Lord, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.” The sovereign will and pleasure of God is not engaged in banishing any sinner from him, or even in punishing him—hell is inhabited exclusively by the *justice* of God: heaven is inhabited by his sovereign will and pleasure, as well as his justice.

2dly. It is sovereignty which proffers the rich blessings of the gospel to all who hear it. The Lord teaches us this in the parable in which these blessings are compared to a feast; the servants were sent to *invite* the guests, nay more, to *compel* them to come in. Every possible argument should be used; there is not an argument which has a tendency to influence man in his choice, which a minister may not, and ought not, to use. Come then to God, for Christ’s sake, without one exception.

Lastly. Consider the love and gratitude due to God from those whom grace has made to differ. You owe him more than all his other creatures; approach him perpetually to receive every thing freely and fully from him. The impulse of momentary feeling is not enough, that will soon fail; you must travel further, you must proceed

to principle; and go forward beyond the principles of your own bosom to the perfections of Deity. Contrast the weakness of finite beings with the essential energy of God; and the safe conclusion at which you will arrive is this, that you must have his Holy Spirit every moment. "All my springs are in thee." "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord; I will pay my vows to the Lord now, in the presence of all his people." Wise man! he first receives the blessing—opens his bosom to welcome Deity; and then it is no wonder that he tunes the harp to sing his praise. Do ye likewise: remember that not one blessing only, but every blessing is provided in the covenant of eternity. The Holy Spirit is vouchsafed, and has engaged to carry on his work to perfection, and to enable you to triumph over every enemy. Approach him then; and if you cannot approach in a spirit of praise, fall down at his footstool in a spirit of prayer. However abject and vile, he has provided the means of receiving you. It is a blessing for the believer to be able to approach Jesus Christ in the midst of all he finds in his own bosom opposing itself to God. He does not attempt to heal himself first; but goes to him conscious of his own utter unworthiness. If some are disposed to shrink from the Saviour because conscious of their un-

worthiness, I would ask, "What better spirit than this can they have?" I say boldly, God cannot give you a better spirit than the deep consciousness of your own unworthiness: appreciate this as a blessing from him; but do not stop here; march on; lay siege to the throne of grace; plead all the divine perfections in prayer; and persevere in prayer, till you receive the blessing: you shall then show forth his praise with joyful lips.

SERMON II.

THE VOICE OF GOD TO HIS PEOPLE.

PSALM LXXXV. 8.

“ I will hear what God the Lord will speak : for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints : but let them not turn again to folly.”

DAVID seems to have been a type of the church, as well as of Christ: perhaps attention to this truth would place some passages of scripture in a more correct and striking point of view than that to which we have been accustomed.

He was a man eminently tried—a man in whose history we find a variety of experience that renders him highly qualified for instructing the church of God; while at the same time, in his exaltation to a throne, the numerous enemies he had to contend with, and the deep afflictions which he experienced, he was a type of Jesus Christ. We rejoice, therefore, in what he says: sometimes as the voice of the church of God, and at others the voice of the Messiah, his great

and glorious antitype. He dwells here on the blessings of the covenant of redemption. "Thou hast been favourable unto thy land; thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob; thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people; thou hast covered all their sin." The psalmist goes on, dwelling on afflictive dispensations, seeking at the same time and finding a remedy where alone it was to be found. "Show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation." He then says, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly."

Four things seem very naturally to challenge our consideration. In the first place, the saints of God. It is said here, "unto his people and to his saints." God has a people, and must, in a very high and important sense, have had a people from eternity. Had not this been the case, he never could have had a people in time; sin would have triumphed completely, and the whole of the family of Adam must have been involved in everlasting ruin.

Let none of us shrink from any truth that is revealed in the word of God. I am aware that many of its precious truths are shamefully caricatured and abused. The remedy is easy; let us boldly receive every truth which God presents

to us, and retain it in his strength, determined rather to part with every thing dear to us, even life itself, than relinquish truth.

In tracing (and we are warranted in tracing) all good to the Almighty, when we travel back to eternity on the wings of that light which God himself affords us in his word, we pursue his purposes, as far as we are concerned, with unerring accuracy. And why should we shrink from a truth which involves our welfare in life, in death, and for ever? It too frequently happens that we blend error with truth, and in consequence of doing so, shrink as naturally from the latter as from the former. But God has separated them for us. Had it not been for the election of grace, no Saviour would have been provided for man; and those who deny the doctrine attempt to sweep the sun from the firmament of heaven. Every argument brought forward against it militates directly against the distinguishing honour conferred upon the humanity of Messiah, in being united to the second person in the Trinity.

But it is said, if we admit election, we must trace reprobation to a decree of the Almighty. No such thing. Election and reprobation have not only different, but opposite sources. Whether you consider the angelic hosts above—the spirits of just men made perfect—or the church

of Christ engaged in ceaseless warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil here below—you must trace all the blessings they enjoy to the electing love of God; for election is the parent of all the good that the creature will ever know: but mark this striking difference,—election flows from eternity—reprobation commences only in time; election is the *parent* of all spiritual good—reprobation is the *child* of spiritual evil; election, with all its blessings, is to be traced to God—reprobation, with all its terrible curses, is to be traced alone to the creature. Had not God purposed to save a people, none could have been saved; while, it is equally true, none perish but the suicide. God saves whom he pleases, within the tower or fortress of his covenant. On the other hand, none reject it but the self-excluded. Both are true; and on no other principle can we account for the procedure of the last judgment, when those who have obeyed the voice of God will be welcomed to the mansions of bliss; and his enemies, who have rejected his invitation, will be consigned to the abodes of eternal woe. And for what?—that evil, which has its origin solely and exclusively in the bosom of the creature.

If we view the truth of God thus accurately, its immediate tendency is to teach men to wonder and adore. I appeal to the individual who

knows experimentally the evil of a corrupt heart. He immediately replies, I have nothing to thank but the election of God; had he not loved me before I loved him, I should have carried on war against him through the countless ages of eternity.

But to his saints. Sinners in the covenant from eternity, made saints in time—Christ and his saints in one covenant for ever. I have before observed upon the etymology of the word saint; its origin is blood. The blessings of the believer are all sealed to him by the blood of the glorious victim, Christ Jesus; he is justified and sanctified. There is an essential difference between justification and sanctification; yet it is equally true that they are indissolubly connected: we cannot receive the one blessing without receiving the other. Some have harped upon the word saint, as signifying to separate and set apart. This is true; but is the setting apart of moral spiritual agents to the service of the living God to be wholly identified with the setting apart of gold and silver vessels for the service of the sanctuary? Impossible. God cannot set apart one who is a transgressor for his service without changing his disposition; unless we suppose that God can be satisfied with a circle of formal services, while the heart is in rebellion against him. No! separate here on earth;

possessing the image of the Almighty; called into a new existence, emphatically described in Scripture as a new birth; for it introduces man into a new element, a new world. The work is begun on earth, and will in a short time be perfect in heaven.

Consider, secondly,

The wise resolution of the soul.—Observe the Psalmist's resolution, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak." No one is attentive to the voice of God till God disposes him to be so. God is the last being to whom man, under the influence of his native disposition, is willing to attend.

The purposes of the Almighty are not a rule of action; it is true, we discover them, and in our favour, but this is a subsequent blessing. It is in obedience to his holy will that we learn his purposes, and how to make a wise and holy use of them. But to attempt to make them our rule of action is absurd in the extreme; his purposes can constitute a rule for none but himself.

Neither can the providences of God be made the rule of our actions, for we cannot interpret them at the present moment. Some rich and valuable lessons may be learnt from them; but we ought to be very cautious, remembering that

" God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

The opinions and example of men are not to form our rule, either good or evil. The good do not exhibit a perfect model, for we find perfection in none but the Saviour; and I need not tell you that the opinions and example of wicked men cannot possibly form any rule of action.

Nor are our feelings to be trusted. This is a source of prolific error; involved in "an evil heart of unbelief." Feelings must not be opposed to truth. The Scripture says, All are sinners, that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. The transgressor says, It is no such thing; I feel that my heart is a very good one: now this corrupt feeling is only an instrument in the hands of Satan, by which he imposes on its possessor. The Socinian says, It is impossible that God and man should be one person; he is under the influence of corrupt feeling. Our feelings are by no means to regulate Scripture, but Scripture is to regulate our feelings. This is one error into which the family of earth are perpetually falling. Instead of saying, I will hear what God the Lord will speak; one says, I am so dull, it is useless for me to pray. But what says truth? Insensibility is one of the attributes of sin, and Jesus Christ, the great physician, has engaged to cure this evil. Individuals involve themselves in daily difficulties in consequence of attending

to feeling. A wise man will let his intellect have the mastery and not his feeling. The truth of God ought to guide us perpetually, and this constitutes the perfection of all in heaven. Feelings do not first influence them ; but they are first influenced by truth ; and the conclusion is this, that feeling is destined eventually to be made wholly subservient to truth, and to live in truth as its element for ever. It is the mighty effort of faith, day after day, to listen to the truth of God, and this is exemplified in Messiah: had he listened to feeling, he would have failed in his great work of atonement. Vouchsafe to us, O Lord, we beseech thee, a portion of his divine wisdom, that we may triumph over all enemies as he triumphed, and reign with him above, for ever and ever!

Again, we have every reason to induce us to listen to the voice of God.

God is immutable truth, and immutable truth has no necessary abode in any bosom but that of the Almighty. There is no being beyond the reach of imposition but God himself; and we ought to receive truth, not because this or that favourite minister has said so, but only as it concurs with the truth of God as revealed. No minister, who has read his commission rightly, wishes a truth to be believed because he utters it, but simply because it is the truth of God.

In the third place. Attending to the voice of

God comprises in it every blessing. It involves rich communion with the Almighty in all the exercises we go through here below. Do not imagine that the soul may not be attentive to the truth of God, even when in deep affliction; I am speaking of those exercises of heart which none can experience but they who are born of God, and who live in daily communion with their heavenly Father. In the midst of these, truth becomes a fixed principle; for the Holy Spirit is constantly engaged in transcribing the truths of revelation on the fleshy tablets of the heart; bringing thus gradually to perfection that living volume of the Bible within the bosom, which is destined to be the book that God himself will open at the last day, in the presence of an assembled, world to peruse in it his own beauty and glory for evermore.

The fourth thing I dwell upon is, the blessing of which the believer is supremely in pursuit. "He will speak peace unto his people." And who can speak peace but God?—a finite being cannot, it is impossible. If we listen to what Jesus says in the New Testament, we shall soon find what he is, and what the blessings which emanate from him. "My peace I leave with you."

Mark the emphatic words; and he says, "I am with you to the end of the world." He is the life of his own peace. Mark two things peculiarly

interesting. 1. It is a peace purchased by him for us, for “the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes are we healed.” 2. “*My* peace I give unto you:” it is a peace which inhabited his own bosom; a peace which he possessed and enjoyed. Consider the stability of this peace;—it is unchangeable; it has its birth in, and flows from, the divine perfections; its life is involved in all the glories of the life of Jesus. O there are treasures and a delight in true religion, to which we do not pay sufficient attention. Who is the best judge of these things? He who is in the conscious possession of these truths; there will be an echo within his bosom, *All is true.*

Consider the blessings that this peace involves. First, it includes the friendship of God in a higher and more glorious sense than any other being can enjoy it.

Angels cannot enter into the sublime bliss of a glorified believer. They have not all the qualifications that are necessary. There are glorious peculiarities to be found in those who have been created anew by the Spirit of Jesus.

It is a comprehensive peace. It excludes nothing but sin, and those who are determined to rebel against God for ever. It is connected also with a disposition to pity and weep over those who are living in enmity against God, how-

ever aggravated their transgression may be ; but this feeling is not destined to live for ever. It lives in the bosom of the child of God in time, that he may be stimulated to use every effort to rescue brands from the burning.

We ought to be missionaries in our own families, ever endeavouring to advance the kingdom of God and the eternal welfare of immortal souls.

This peace embraces the dispensations of God, however afflictive they may be, because they are filled and pervaded with the God whose messengers they are to convey the love of Heaven to earth.

The last thing I would observe, is this ; that if the holy use which the Christian makes of this peace proves it to be a licentious peace, I will then recall what I have said ; but never till then : for I am sure, and I can prove, that its tendency is holy, and that it disposes the soul to be like God.

We find the work in which the believer is engaged, and its effects, admirably delineated by the psalmist, in the 19th Psalm : “ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul ; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple : the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart : the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

This is the meditation of one who knew what

the peace of God was within his conscience—the triumphant meditation of one who knew his interest in the covenant of God—one whom the Holy Spirit was making meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

You who are strangers to this peace, and who are listening to your own corrupt feelings, rather than to the voice of your God, let me remind you of an awful truth; you are doing precisely what Satan would have you do. If you live and die in this state, you must be his victims for ever. O banish all error, and listen to the voice of God. There is nothing in God to keep you from him; approach him in Jesus, and accept the proffered blessing.

I would address others who may be in pursuit of it: persevere in the pursuit; though the vision tarry long, yet wait for it. Examine yourselves; do not listen to the voice of thoughtless professors, who call a blessing worthy of God himself legality, and then throw it away. “Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; cleanse thou me from secret faults.” Are you in the daily habit of doing any thing against which conscience protests? Cut off the right arm, pluck out the right eye; and if you have not ability to do it, earnestly entreat of the Lord to do it for you.

To those who are in the conscious possession

of the blessing, I would say, Prize it above all things; be daily exercised as the apostle was, to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and man. See that it be daily and hourly purged by the blood of Jesus; and by faith in it you will possess so mighty a principle of action, that no enemy shall bring you down: without this, I dare not promise you safety for a single moment.

SERMON III.

INFINITE AND FINITE BEING.

JOB iv. 17—19.

*“ Shall mortal man be more just than God?
 Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?
 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and
 his angels he charged with folly: how much
 less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose
 foundation is in the dust, which are crushed
 before the moth?”*

THERE is something peculiarly interesting and instructive in the book of Job: Job's friends were excellent divines, as well as excellent philosophers and poets; and if we compare our knowledge at the present day with theirs, we shall find that we know little more of divine things than they did. We find them possessed of a system of truth, at once accurate and sublime, comprising a knowledge of heaven, earth, and hell; of uncreated being in all its glory, and

of created being under all possible circumstances. O how much to be pitied are those who know not how to prize their Bibles; and how gratifying to a duly regulated mind, to find, on entering the poor man's cottage, the Bible rightly valued: it is his wealth, his estate, his patrimony, his encyclopædia, his all. The individual who has contracted a taste for the Bible, possesses an elegant taste; while he who is not in love with the beauties of the sacred page has no taste at all; the former has a spiritual taste, an appetite for God himself; and this is no improper expression, for Jesus Christ is represented as the food of the soul.

Eliphaz, in the chapter before us, relates the fact, that he had been visited by an inhabitant of the worlds above; and there exists not a more striking description of the feelings of humanity in the presence of an inhabitant of the spiritual world—"Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than

God?" &c. Surely no one who was not intimately acquainted with God and his perfections, and with being, infinite and finite, could have delivered these important truths. The efforts of infidelity in the present day are very contemptible; but, alas! they poison the minds of our youth. All the arguments of infidelity are contemptible, when the Scriptures are believed, and opposed to them, though some things are infinitely beyond the reach of any finite mind. The Scriptures are the streams of divine truth, of which God is the fountain; and if we were only to take pains to trace the workings of our minds, and to compare them with the Scriptures, we should be convinced, that they emanate from Deity, as certainly as light from the sun.

Consider, 1st. The perfections of Deity; 2nd. The imperfection of finite beings generally; 3rd. The imperfection of finite beings, as transgressors.

I. Unless we feel the perfections of God, we cannot rightly value his law or his gospel. God sends his law into the heart to convince a sinner; it is inspired with his own majesty, and then it effectually does its office. It is true, it always does its office in one respect, by condemnation; but so effectually when thus illumined by the grace of God, that it drives the sinner from himself and gives him no rest, till he finds an eter-

nal one in the bosom of a crucified Redeemer. God only is in full possession of being; and compared with him, the aggregate of finite creatures is as nothing—as the worm that we despise and trample under our feet. God is one, who fills all times and places at one and the same moment. He who is the inhabitant of eternity, dwells in every second of time: he who possesses infinity, resides in every particle of matter: he is omnipresent, and partially present nowhere: this truth must be upheld, or we shall be involved in inextricable difficulties, and the most absurd blasphemies, every moment. Suppose, for instance, God to be partially present anywhere; there must then be two Gods or more; and if two, why not ten thousand? But we are not to dwell on these things as idle speculative truths, calculated to amuse the fancy: they are to be brought into our whole profession, morning, noon, and night. Many texts of Scripture prove what has been said, particularly the following: “Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him, *also*, that is of a contrite and humble spirit.” Is it asked, then, where does God dwell? The heaven of heavens cannot contain him; yet, in the heart of his child he dwells in all his glory; and though his creature cannot now bear the full display of

this glory, the time is approaching when the intellect will be so illumined, and the heart so expanded, as to welcome Deity in all the glory of his perfections. Another text, while it proves the omnipresence of God, affords a source of consolation to all who believe in Jesus: "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him."

Well might the individual who was desired by a certain monarch to define Deity, request a day to consider the matter, and a second, and a third, till, pressed for an answer, he replied, "The more I think of God, the more I am lost in the contemplation of him." Nevertheless, to what God has revealed, we ought to pay the utmost attention; and where we are left in ignorance, it is wisdom and humility to be contented, and even delighted in that ignorance; while we have so much to arrest our attention in doctrines, which, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, are the creators of principles; and precepts,—the channels in which those principles are to flow to the glory of God.

The creating and sustaining power of God are clear, though the manner of them is incomprehensible; but there is one thing to which our attention should be supremely directed—the

moral perfections of Jehovah, especially his holiness: we should feel this to be as essential an attribute as power or omniscience: God must cease to exist, when he ceases to be holy: may we study this lesson by the light of truth, and the principle, if properly learned, will end in practice. Good and evil do not arise from any arbitrary appointment of Deity. The law that is holy, just, and good, proceeds from a will that is holy, just, and good; and that will from an essence that is holy, just, and good; there is no fatality in the case; every thing that proceeds from God is infinitely free and holy. The holiness of God consists in infinite love to good, and hatred to evil; and the proof of this shines in perfect glory and beauty in the person of Messiah. There are difficulties respecting each particle of matter so incomprehensible, that a child might readily puzzle a philosopher; but when we behold the incarnate God, dying to atone for transgressions that we have committed, we discover the holiness of God at full length, the perfect image of his own perfections in the person of his Son. We perceive his holiness filling both law and gospel in the character of Jesus Christ; we see it in his hatred to sin, in the sufferings of an infinite person; we see it in his love to the sinner, delivering him from guilt and condemnation; the sufferings of the Saviour

imply both in an equal degree. A view of God in Christ melts the heart of the most obdurate sinner ; he perceives his holiness in the law and in the gospel, in his mercy and in his justice ; and it makes and preserves him holy for ever.

II. We come to consider the imperfection of finite beings though innocent. Mark how humble the messenger is who leaves the courts above—" Behold, he put no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly." Pride is the first-born of ignorance ; it cannot live in heaven, because heaven is the seat of knowledge. The messenger of heaven not only owns but triumphs in his dependence, and all the blessings connected with it which he is momentarily receiving at the hands of God. We have before observed, that God is in possession of all being : creatures, then, are more nearly allied to nothing than to essential existence. The angels know and live under the influence of this important truth in the presence of God. The ignorance of those glorious intelligences is infinitely greater than their knowledge ; not that they are ever guilty of actual transgression in the presence of God ; but, considered in themselves, they are more nearly allied to folly than to wisdom : a fact, a stubborn argument, proves this, namely, the fall of

some and the preservation of others. The latter are called elect angels, because God chose to preserve them; though there is nothing connected with this election that could impel others to commit sin.

The most glorious beings by the law of creation are infinitely inferior to the Creator. For God to create a god is an absurdity. Every creature is infinitely and eternally dependent on God for being and for well-being; not only for existence, but for rational existence; not only for rational, but for spiritual existence; and when the real truth is examined, we shall find that the holiness that dwells in their bosoms emanates from the holiness of God himself; nothing less is able to secure them from their own natural imperfections. All beings owe their goodness to God. Sin can be traced to no higher source than the natural imperfection of the creature. Some will say, Is there not a negative cause? No; there is nothing negative in God; all that comes from him is positive; sin cannot ascend to the decrees of God; a negative decree is no decree at all. Every decree of God is a positive good, without any portion of evil. No creature can perish but by wilfully turning aside from God, while his conscience is eternally protesting against it; he

will do wrong, he will sin against the clearest conviction.

“ He putteth no trust in his servants :” it is impossible he should ; God can trust none but himself ; he never has, he never will. This presents us with a valuable lesson. If we are truly wise, we shall not trust each other, or ourselves, but God exclusively : and this has no tendency to create a suspicious disposition ; liberality and generosity of mind can only proceed from truth. Were an angel to descend from the celestial habitations, and fix his abode in this place, I would not trust him exclusively, but only as an instrument in the hands of God. If we trust only those whom we believe to be in the hands of God, and preserved by him, our correspondences and connexions will be only among such ; but some are ready to object, “ We have so placed our trust, and have been disappointed :” true, but we do not value a sovereign the less because a counterfeit has been palmed upon us. I find deceit where I had not expected to meet with it ; nevertheless, I learn the more to prize that which is excellent.

III. “ How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth ?” If

the most glorious innocent beings are infinitely below God, and as nothing in his presence, we are separated still farther by a two-fold impediment—1st. As creatures; 2nd. As transgressors. If, then, the messenger of the Almighty spoke in terms so humiliating of himself and his fellow angels, and so highly of God; how shall we lift up our heads, who devour sin as bread, and drink down iniquity like water; who wait daily at the gates of hell to let ourselves in, and should have fatally succeeded long ere this, if Mercy had not kept the key, and withstood our mad attempt? O love without a bottom or a shore, that delivers the sinner from himself, and exalts him to the highest heaven!

It is necessary to keep the Redeemer continually in view. No partial view of things will humble the creature; a knowledge of his own imperfections will but harden him in guilt; while a knowledge of the mercy of God in Christ, connected with a knowledge of himself as a transgressor, will soften and break the most obdurate heart. Low as man is, however, the condescension of God in the humanity of Messiah sinks still lower; yes, that being who fills immensity and inhabits eternity, descends in our nature lower than hell. As no finite being can be raised so high as God, so none

can descend so low. None but he who occupies the zenith of glory in heaven could descend into the abyss of hell. Glorious truth! Are angels so interested in these things as to descend from heaven to earth to impart truth to man? God passed by the angels, and assumed the human nature; and hear what he says—"I am a worm, and no man!" Though he was "the mighty God," and "the everlasting Father," yet he was acquainted, in his own person, with all the weakness and helplessness of man.

But why were these things dwelt on by the messenger from above? To humble and then drive us to despair? God forbid! Despair never humbled any man. Is, then, this proclamation issued to deter the sinner from approaching God? By no means; it affords, on the contrary, the strongest encouragement. Jesus became "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," and "bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" and although, in his humanity, so weak as to be "crushed before the moth," yet, continually preserved by almighty power, he had strength to bear the curse, and to drink the cup of vengeance to the dregs. In the gospel every encouragement is given to the trembling sinner; presumption and despair are swept aside, and the narrow path discovered that leads to eternal life.

While here below, man carries in his bosom continually a suicidal principle; and the holy energy of God, that preserved the angels in their first estate, is necessary to prevent this principle from evincing itself in our destruction. The believer's attention, then, should be continually directed to the sacrifice and righteousness of Jesus Christ; that his conscience may be kept in perfect peace, while the Spirit of Jesus disciplines him to oppose the might and majesty of God to every evil.

SERMON IV.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD AND ITS EFFECTS.

ROMANS viii. 28.

“ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

“ FOR we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” Faith believes the Divine promise; the object of faith is the veracity of the promise; the object of hope is the treasure of the promise. He who hopes anticipates an eternal weight of glory, and has in his bosom the earnest of an eternal inheritance. In this earnest of hope every other grace lives and is exercised. “ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for

as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." The Holy Spirit is given to the church of God to guide and conduct it through time to eternity, by night as well as by day. We may be in circumstances so intricate that we may not know what to pray for; but as our hearts are corrupt, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, we stand in need of a covenant God in all his glory every moment. If we know not what else to ask for, and if we seek God, the period assuredly is not far distant, when light shall visit us in the midst of darkness, and convert the noon of night into the noon of day. "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." How comprehensive is the covenant of grace in all its blessings—Jesus interceding at the throne of God above—the Holy Spirit interceding in the hearts of his family beneath. Who that possesses any portion of true wisdom would be silent at the throne of grace? Pour out your hearts to God; he will hear and answer you, and the answer will eventually involve himself in all his glory. Perseverance in prayer is one of God's appointed means of answering prayer. He who perse-

veres may rest assured that his suit is not neglected. There is, perhaps, no text in all the book of God more rich and consolatory than this passage—"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

I. The purpose of the Almighty. He must have had a purpose. No intellectual being ought to do any thing without a purpose; it is a reproach to any one to act without a plan: individuals frequently impugn the purpose of God, because it is misunderstood; they have hastily and unwisely inferred that his purpose comprises evil as well as good; the reverse is the case with one single exception—that exception (paradoxical as it may appear) involving the highest good, though in one respect the greatest evil, the punishment of sin: but a punishment transferred from the head of the guilty; and infinite eternal innocence visited for our sins.—To trace moral evil to the purpose of the Almighty is very inaccurate indeed; because God is good, and exclusively good: and evil cannot emanate from the purpose of God, unless God himself be evil. God is infinitely remote from all evil—infinity and eternity rise, and ever must rise, between God and moral evil. It is equally true that

there is nothing negative in Deity—every thing in God is positively good, and infinitely good—Deity presents us with a perpetual contrast to the creature. The creature is the only source of evil because connected with the parent of evil. All the family of heaven, though free from evil, will necessarily be connected with its parent for ever: but they will be taught a delightful and holy theme from this humiliating truth—they will prize their fortress, the bosom of a covenant God, while hymns of gratitude and praise will rise from their hearts for ever.

God is the only being wholly connected with positive good. There is more of what is negative than positive in all created being; in every creature before the throne of God. God's essence necessarily excludes evil of every kind: this is his essential prerogative. It is absolutely necessary that this truth should be thoroughly digested in our minds. It brings down from heaven the weight of infinity and eternity to force the conscience from evil, and to teach and dispose it to dictate to its possessor the ceaseless pursuit of supreme and eternal good. Evil flows from what is negative in the creature. We and Satan may purpose evil—God is infinitely beyond the possibility of this.

II. The purpose of God not only is good, but

it comprises the greatest good. It blesses those pure beings who have not been suffered to forfeit their original innocence: his purpose in its fulfilment presents them with ceaseless good. But would we consider the purpose of the Almighty in all its glory, we must peruse the blessings of the covenant of grace, and consider what it has done for guilty man. His purpose and his love brought down his Son from the zenith of glory, and involved him in the depths of our hell. Justice demanded the sacrifice, and in the second person in Jehovah mercy delightfully surrendered it. In contemplating this stupendous truth we ascend far beyond the privileges and bliss of the angelic hosts. Consider again that Spirit which originally called all things into existence, and now preserves them—consider him as given in all the worth of Messiah's sacrifice to quicken those naturally dead in trespasses and sins. In one word, himself given to his family as a covenant God. Every blessing of the covenant is filled with God himself. Now, I ask, is there any thing but what is good in the purpose of God? No! to assert the contrary is a blasphemy which would induce me to close my ears, and hasten from the presence of him who uttered it. Sin has created a void in the human soul, which nothing can fill but Deity in all his glory. Delight in this God as a holy God, and

you will know what pleasure is. We are not strangers to pleasure : God has given us many things sweetly and innocently gratifying to this frail frame ; and he intends that we should receive pleasure in the lawful enjoyment of them. He has given us an intellect, which may be highly cultivated, perhaps, beyond any idea we can form of its powers ; but, after all, man, in his natural state, is infinitely remote from what is absolutely necessary to make him truly and eternally happy. Man must be spiritualized, he must be united to God. The happiness of God himself is immediately derived from his holiness. That of man can only flow from an union with a holy God. God must take possession of his bosom, and by his Holy Spirit influence every thought, word, and action : then, and then only, will the believer realize true happiness ; and knowing what the real end of his existence is, earth and all its glories vanish into nothing.

III. Another thing in the purpose of God, which is not generally noticed, is this ; God, in the fulfilment of his purpose, meant to meet man as an accountable agent. The responsibility of the creature and the purpose of the Creator are too frequently opposed. Awful effects flow from such ignorance. Consider Christ as the chief blessing of the gospel : the offer of the Saviour and of the

Holy Spirit, is addressed to every individual within reach of the voice of truth. "Preach the gospel to every creature." Now the gospel is the offspring of the purpose of the Almighty, and intended by him to meet man in a state of nature. The Saviour died for man as a sinner : the gospel visits and addresses him when a sinner : and God has again and again listened to the voice of nature. How often did his people in the wilderness call upon him with the simple cry of distressed nature, and he heard and delivered them. Simon Magus, though in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, was commanded to address God in prayer. And have we not ourselves experienced this ? Has not God courted the voice of nature in the conscience, and the sinner persevered in disregarding it ? God, in his providence, has removed from a man the wife of his bosom : was that insufficient, a beloved child has followed ; personal afflictions have been added ; till at last distressed nature has carried her sorrows to God, and cast herself, with them, at his feet, yet not knowing rightly what to pray for ; (for we have no idea of true religion till we possess the inestimable treasure :) yet God has again and again listened to the honest and sincere voice of nature ; for there may be sincerity where there is no spirituality. Had it not been the purpose of God to meet the responsibility of

the creature, he never would have given his gospel, or sent his Son to die. God must have a purpose; and man must be responsible, or he never could be saved. Consider the attributes of the Creator or of the creature, and you must come to the same conclusion. God purposed from eternity to invite sinners; to command them to repent and believe. Why are they invited and commanded? Because God loves sinners, and because they are accountable agents. This does not militate against the election of God, but is absolutely necessary to illustrate it, and place it in its true light. The purposes of God are in our favour individually. There is no hostility in the purpose of God against any, but much friendship even towards those who are madly determined to perish.

IV. The offspring of this purpose—The church of God, “called according to his purpose.” In considering this head of my discourse, it will be found to echo what has been before said, that God deals with man as a rational and accountable being. Sin and Satan lead transgressors to hell, while they know not where they are going. God addresses them as reasonable and accountable beings. How delightful to hear the voice of God, to obey the call, to open the heart to welcome the blessing he provides, and to trea-

sure it up for eternity,—“ Called according to his purpose.” This implies that they are addressed in the ministry of the gospel. It implies also the distance to which man has naturally travelled from God. Man, by one transgression, removed himself to the distance of infinity and eternity from God. Only let sin develope itself, and this will be immediately seen. Wherever sin once enters, there it fixes itself eternally as a habit, unless God of his infinite mercy interpose. Read the history of Satan; and man is only his counterpart, considered exclusively as a transgressor. No purpose of the Almighty ever drove Satan himself into any sin. All the sins he has ever committed are the offspring of his first transgression. Sin is the prolific source of sin; and it will be eternally productive in hell, one sin giving birth to another perpetually. From this I derive the strongest argument for the eternal duration of punishment. The very nature of sin requires that it should be punished for ever. It casts God from the creature to the distance of infinity and eternity; and the creature to the same distance from God. Justice, in punishing man, does precisely what man himself does. It enters into every individual sin that he commits, and banishes him to the same distance from God to which he has banished himself. When we shall see the wicked punished in eternity, we shall adore

the divine perfections, because we shall find nothing but justice : and justice , remember, has a necessary existence ; it is not the child of any thing arbitrary in God, it is his very essence.

But God calls the sinner, and none can make him hear but God. Man, by the due exercise of his own natural powers, may form wonderfully correct ideas of divinity as a system : but this is not enough to influence the heart. Yet this knowledge involves an imperative duty. He knows that the Holy Spirit has been promised, and that it is his duty to seek the blessing in the persevering use of all appointed means. His wilful neglect will meet him at the last, and only embitter his misery. See the means which God uses when he speaks ; his own energy, his own truth in his own life, visit the transgressor : then, and not till then, he becomes a living soul. This enables him to achieve the greatest triumph—to conquer himself. If we turn over the pages of Scripture, we find what effectual calling is :— God’s address to sinners in his truth, and his omnipotent, invincible address to the human heart ; this produces a new creation, far more glorious than the old : “ You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Seek this inestimable blessing,

the greatest of all miracles, the new creation of God in the human bosom.

V. The characteristic spirit of the believer in Jesus Christ, is love. It is the peculiar province of the Holy Spirit to shed abroad the love of God in the heart. It is known to the believer only. Much as an individual may know under proper cultivation of mind, no idea can be obtained of this till the blessing itself is imparted, as a principle, by God the Holy Spirit.

The object of this love is, first, God himself.

In winging his flight from earth to heaven, the believer is determined not to be satisfied till he finds his all in God. I am far from depreciating any thing which God has given to men. Riches, science, learning, are very useful ; but, when we read the history of the church, God seems to say, there is something infinitely more valuable than any of these things—the love of God in the heart. We see the wisdom and the love of God in raising up, at different periods, men eminently learned ; qualified by their learning and attainments to enter the field with the enemies of the church and of the truth of God : yet by far the greater part of the family of heaven have been a poor and afflicted people, little acquainted with human learning ; but, which is infinitely more valuable, acquainted with the spirituality of God ; having the image of the living God in the

heart ; and a principle delightfully constraining its possessor to bid adieu to created good, and seek his all in God. Now, I ask your consciences individually, What do you say to these things ? Nothing less than this amounts to true religion. The soul, driven out of every thing, seeks and finds its all in a covenant God. This truth, connected with the responsibility of the creature and diligence in the use of means, is richly illustrated in the parable of the merchant seeking goodly pearls. He was not seeking the pearl of great price ; he was in pursuit of moral virtues to justify himself, when he found the Saviour. Listen not to any suggestions to relax, in the least degree, in the efforts God has pointed out ; in approaching him to be delivered from sin, the worst and the mightiest of all enemies.

2ndly. Love to God embraces every thing like God ; it embraces the whole family of God. Wherever the image of God is seen, it is dearer to the believer than any thing else ; and, as I believe that I am addressing a part of the family of God, I say to you, Love one another.

3rdly. There will be delight in the service of God. No service will be too hard. Our delight in his service is a strong proof of our loving him. His service alone is freedom ; every other is slavery.

4thly. A fourth attribute of this love, is de-

light in extending mercy to others. Nothing like this inhabits the bosom of the natural man. When we trace our natural pedigree, we travel through the pages and centuries of antiquity to find some illustrious ancestor: but when we trace our high descent from the King of kings, we pursue a different course, and prove our relationship by our offspring; viz. the fruits of our profession; the children of mercy, because the parents of mercy; and it is only in being the parents of mercy, that we evince, to ourselves or to others, that we are the children of mercy. "By their fruits ye shall know them." O may this be our case individually! Whatever injuries we receive, we have nothing to do but to forgive them. When we are ill-treated, God intends that we should be highly honoured; he is thus granting us an opportunity of exhibiting his own image in all its loveliness—loveliness to which angelic hosts are strangers. They cannot show mercy as we can, for they are beyond the reach of all injury.

Lastly. All things work together for good, whether we consider ourselves as individuals, or as members of a community; not only as fellow Christians, but as fellow countrymen also—a truth peculiarly appropriate at this time. "All things," public and private—I believe that, eventually, when God shall open the volume of his economy before us, and enable us to read all its

now closed pages, every thing below will be satisfactorily proved to have been subservient to the interests of his church, the rod of chastisement, as well as the sunshine of prosperity. If a storm be impending, God inhabits the tempest, saying, "It shall be well with the righteous." His own glory will appear in greater splendour than ever; while it will develop itself eternally in the salvation of his believing family. He has promised to shield his people; and though for a season he afflict them, yet with great loving kindness will he gather them.

The idea "all things," seems to be taken from, or may be illustrated by, the prescription of a physician: a number of things are frequently mixed together in it—things bitter and sweet; sometimes poison itself, in a certain proportion, is skilfully administered by a wise physician. Thus, things which may be considered in themselves as evils, when united in the chain of the holy economy of God, become productive of real good to his church.

It is sometimes said, that sin works for good to the believer. It is an equivocal sentence, and one which ought not to pass without explanation. Sin being among the things which work together for good may be so explained. It is sin as imputed to the Saviour; sin as atoned for by the Saviour; sin as repented of by the sinner; sin

as triumphed over by faith in the atoning blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ ; sin as perused in all its workings in the human spirit, seen in all its machinations by the eye of God, fought against and triumphed over by the arm of Jehovah.

In conclusion. How are we to enter into the spirit of the text? It is not to be viewed at a distance. We can enter into the sweetness and bliss of the text only in the cultivation of individual piety ; meeting it, and extracting its sweets, in the image of God in our own bosoms. God never addresses any moral accountable agent in his word, or by his ministers, without involving in the address an obligation to obey. A blessing also is involved in whatever is commanded by God ; and here we have every possible encouragement to wait upon him for the influence of his Holy Spirit. Then, under the conscious influence of his Spirit, knowing we are believers in Jesus, we may reach our hand from earth to heaven ; and gathering the rich fruit of the tree of life, feast on it here below, as that which is destined to promote our growth in true religion ; till we attain the maturity of Messiah, and live and reign in the health of God himself for ever.

SERMON V.

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

EPHESIANS v. 2.

“ Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

No one but God can oppose sin successfully. Such is the weakness of the creature, that all finite beings, in all their immaculate glory, are incapable of opposing one sinful propensity successfully. But for the mighty power of God, sin would invade heaven, sweep its inhabitants into hell, and bury them there for ever. If we once knew ourselves, we should feel the absolute necessity of God's covenant, in all its infinitely glorious provisions; not only to raise us from the death of sin, to justify us, to sanctify us, to make us perfect as God is perfect, and holy as he is holy; but to keep us in a state of perfection

through the countless ages of eternity. If we knew ourselves individually, we should have no dispute about doctrine ; we should feel that, whatever the disposition of a finite being may be, good or evil, he must be eternally responsible to God. We should feel, at the same time, that the most exalted intelligence, and the purest, as well as the most exalted, would soon undo and ruin himself, if left to his own guidance. If we turn over the pages of revelation, we there see what God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have done for fallen man ; first, in the Saviour's fulfilment of his covenant offices here below, in dying the just for the unjust ; and, secondly, in the sanctifying, strengthening, and refreshing influences of the Spirit of the living God. Till these truths are known and prized, man is altogether indisposed to attend to the voice of God. Rebellion is his element and his delight ; and all the eloquence of heaven and earth would be insufficient to deter him from the commission of a single sin. The mighty power of God alone can effect this, and carry on the work to perfection. Under its transforming influence, he listens with delight to the inspired writers when they charge him " to lay aside all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, with all malice ; and be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God

for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as dear children." We know the delight with which children follow their parents: this is the delight which true religion inspires. It disposes us to follow God through every difficulty.

Perhaps the trials to which we may be exposed are much greater than we are aware of. We possess and enjoy profound peace, no one presuming to disturb or molest us in the least degree in the service of God; the law of the land shielding and protecting us. God grant that this peace may not be used and converted by Satan and our own deceitful hearts into a cradle to rock us to sleep on the brink of hell. Perhaps prosperity is the severest test to which principle can be brought. We need not be desirous of fire and sword to try our principles, if we are conscious of triumphing over our bosom lusts, while in the lap of prosperity. "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

In the first place, let us consider,

I. The sacrifice of Christ; and in doing so, I would first observe, that a *divine* person was absolutely necessary. The aggregate excellencies of finite being are infinitely too little to present the

Almighty with a sacrifice for sin. Finite being, however excellent, possesses nothing but what is due to God, for, and from, itself; while it is equally true, that the principle of obedience must continue to emanate from the bosom of God into the bosom of his servants throughout eternal ages. The individual who undertakes to atone, must have a perfect knowledge of the offended and the offending party. He must know the perfection of the one, and the imperfection and sinfulness of the other. If sin requires impartial punishment, it must, for that reason, demand all the punishment that is due to it. The individual who is punished for transgression, must be one who has a perfect knowledge of the evil and desert of sin.

Again: He who atones, must be in possession of infinite worth. Nothing less than the glory of infinity and eternity can atone for transgression. The individual must also be possessed of humanity, for this obvious reason; that man had transgressed, and man must atone.

In the person of Messiah, we behold every thing God could possibly desire; while we do not behold less than the integrity of the penitent requires. A divine person, comprising Deity and humanity in himself, atones for sin. No one but Messiah could possibly do this. Here we find the Saviour's infinite glories involv-

ing themselves in all the distresses, in all the shame, and in all the misery of humanity. The robe of shame, when worn by the transgressor, is exquisitely shameful ; but when worn by his Surety, it becomes the robe of glory. We behold, in the sufferings of Jesus, more than the torments of those in hell : though suffering for transgression, they cannot conceive fully of the desert of transgression. May we ascend Calvary this morning, and fix the eye of faith on God's own Son, suffering for us. Scripture insists on this. The rite of circumcision proves it. The blood of man—in other words, the punishment of man—is required perpetually, and that in early infancy.

Now, listen to the language of Scripture : “ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” Justice admits of no alternative : it follows, then, that a divine person must suffer, or God could not forgive, justify, and change a sinner, consistently with his own holy perfections.

Again : It was absolutely necessary that the individual who atoned, should be wholly at his own disposal. Now, no finite being is at his

own disposal ; no finite being can say, I will do as I please ; but Messiah speaks of himself in language that finite being could not adopt, without insulting God. He speaks of his own life, that he had power to lay it down, and power to take it again ; and the apostle, in writing of him to the Hebrews, says, in a few emphatic words, “ Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself.”

The doctrine of the Trinity is opposed ; but when we peruse Scripture, we shall find the absolute necessity of a plurality of persons. A divine person to present a sacrifice ; and if so, a divine person to receive that sacrifice. “ Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

Consider, in the second place,

II. His love in giving himself. And here we behold the love of God in all its glory. The individual who thinks on the majesty and infinite exaltation of Deity, may well wonder that God should ever have thought of any being but himself. It is indeed an act of infinite condescension in him, to look down with approbation on the hosts of heaven : where then shall we

find language strong enough to describe the love that embraces a sinner in all his iniquity. Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us. Here we behold the love of Christ; the love of a divine person embracing God, embracing the law of God, and embracing the sinner in all his shame.

Two of the attributes of this love never unfolded their glories before. The *intensity* and the *holiness* of it were never before manifested. He loved the sinner in the midst of his sin: read the fifth chapter of Romans, where the apostle dwells so emphatically on this love; and here we find the will of the supreme Being unfolding itself in all its glory, (when pouring like a deluge into the soul of humanity,) to enable the Saviour to triumph gloriously. It is a certain fact that his love to man increased in proportion as he discovered the sinfulness, and experienced in his own bosom the desert, of transgression. We learn the most striking truths by contrast; what little things operate continually to make us displeased with each other! Even spiritual congregations are disturbed, divided, and separated from each other by the veriest trifles. But sin and hell only served to endear us to Jesus. He never loved us as he loves us now, till he had suffered our desert.

If we descend into the regions of woe where the enemies of God are now punished, and must be punished for ever, we shall see nothing but the justice of God ; that justice not satisfied in the least degree ; though punishing, its demand is perpetually increasing. Hear me, thoughtless sinner : I choose to dwell on the horrors of hell in the midst of the glories of the gospel, because I have not courage to preach a sermon exclusively on the infinitely awful subject, which the punishment of the wicked must necessarily involve. Is sin a little thing ? Ask the Almighty when he punished his only begotten Son.

Consider what the habit of sin is ; view an individual who has pursued a course of transgression forty or fifty years ; he is so wedded to it, the whole world cannot separate him from his darling lust ; he sets every thing at defiance : but sin never attains its full size till the sinner descends into hell ; there it fights against the Almighty with the strength of a giant. The flames of hell only inspire it with new strength to carry on war against God for ever and ever. Justice is not satisfied in the least degree, and why ? because sin is not annihilated, the sufferings are not voluntary ; their sufferings are imposed on them, and they are hardening themselves in transgression. Now follow me to Calvary. Behold God as well as man, a divine person suffering for us.

Here for once, and once only, behold the sovereignty of God in all its glory, in all its loveliness, connected with the justice of God in all its terrors. Messiah is punished, that the transgressor may live for ever. The Son of God is punished, that the enemies of God may be made his friends eternally. When the Saviour forsook the mansions of the sky his Father locked the gates of heaven, and threw the key into the depths of hell. He was obliged to descend for it, and find it in its lowest abyss, or he never could have entered the portals of light and glory.

In the third place, I would go on to consider,

III. God's pleasure in the sacrifice of his Son.

And first I would observe, that God is infinitely delighted with his Son, as he is one in essence with him. The pious Baptist gives his disciples a volume of divinity in a few words. He traces every thing to its source. "The Father loveth the Son." Surely then we must anticipate God's pleasure in every thing the Saviour does.

The miracles he wrought, the good he did, the truths he disseminated, were all rich proofs that God was perpetually engaged in accepting his services here below. His passive sufferings closed the gates of hell; his active sufferings opened the gates of heaven.

Again, his resurrection proves, in the

clearest manner, that the Father accepted of his suffering, and Scripture insists on this important truth. It is proved likewise by circumstances that must be peculiarly interesting to him who peruses Scripture with attention. An angel was sent to roll away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre. It became the King of kings to have such a servant.

His ascension also is another striking proof—a proof to the church above as well as to the church below. He entered heaven in his own right, not as a private but public person; and took in triumph from the cross the soul of the penitent thief, and presented it perfect at his Father's bar, as a pledge to his church, that every individual member of his mystical body should be with him in glory.

Lastly. His intercession proves it in the clearest manner; and this shows the glory of his sacrifice: he died once for sin, he now lives in the presence of God. The sacrifice that once died on Calvary lives before the throne of God, demanding mercy in justice to itself, with all the eloquence and all the worth of God. May the Spirit of Jesus take of the things of Jesus, and make them known to us.—He intercedes in his own infinite worth as a divine person, and he leads the worship of heaven and earth. He is the first of

subjects as well as the first of kings. Receive all his blessings, and then you cannot but imitate his example.

To us there is another striking proof that God is well pleased with his sacrifice—the success of his gospel. The Holy Spirit has been vouchsafed in a more plentiful manner than before the crucifixion of Christ; it teaches us, that all descends to us in the person and work of Christ. The success of the gospel is not only the greatest work in which man can be engaged, but it is the greatest and most glorious work of God: every thing that surrounds us, though in a great measure incomprehensible to us, is subservient to promote the glory of God and the salvation of fallen man. God grant that we may be constantly and ardently engaged in the salvation of our own souls; and the effect will be invariably, that we shall not behold with unconcern our fellow-creatures destroying themselves. He who is sensible of the worth of his own soul, and of what Jesus has done for him, cannot be inactive; he must be engaged in doing something to bring sinners to Christ.

Three things seem easily to flow from what I have said.

The evil and danger of unbelief. The rejection of Jesus Christ seals the condemnation of the sinner. This sin seems to be the arch-

temptation of Satan. Converse with individuals, they will not believe what you say, they do not believe that there is evil in sin : and while living under the influence of such blindness and prejudice, the consequence must be, that they go on sinning against the Almighty, and hardening their hearts. O could we annihilate this enemy, the whole world would soon present itself to Jesus.

Another truth which the death of Christ places in a clear point of view, is this:—

Some have gone so far as to trace good and evil to one and the same source. How very awful ! The death of Christ proves and contrasts the infinite and eternally opposite sources of good and evil : it proves that sin and the desert of sin are the *exclusive possession* of the sinner. The death of Messiah proves that all spiritual good comes from God ; and that all spiritual evil flows from the creature. The shining of the sun in the firmament does not prove the existence of day more clearly than the sun of righteousness demonstrates the truth on which I am dwelling.

We see here also the work of faith. Faith disposes the believer to honour the Son as the Father honours him. The Father accepts him as a sacrifice in all his glory ; the believer does the same ; and in doing so he is justified from

every charge: he believes all his doctrines, trusts all his promises, honours all his commands, in consequence of what?—of receiving Christ. It is the simplicity of truth that causes men to stumble. God presents to us his Son in all his sacrificial glory; and all are welcome to receive him.

Are there any of you desirous of approaching the Lord's table this morning, who feel a fear within of so doing? Are you only desirous of being saved in God's own way? Are you only desirous of being found in the righteousness and image of Jesus? And does conscience say that you prove this sincerity by avoiding all evil? Then come to the Lord's table. It is not for the *degree* or *strength*, but for the *reality* of principle, that we contend.

What think you of Christ? Are you disposed to receive Messiah? Are you weary of the work of sin? Is it your honest desire to be of the number of his children? Then approach his table, and do this in remembrance of him. We frequently find individuals very desirous of honouring their friends by the tenacious observance of their last requests. You hear some such remark as this—"My friend, with his dying breath, entreated me to do this." And shall we Christians neglect what our Saviour desired us to do? Need I tell you, that when the offering was

presented of old by the Jew, to the Lord, confessing his sins, a part was presented back again by the Lord to the offerer, that he might partake of it? Thus it is when we present ourselves to God in Christ. We receive him back as our life. Bread is emphatically called the staff of life, and Jesus in his mediatorial glory is the bread or life of the soul, and will continue to be so for ever. Wine not only refreshes, but in some cases is medicinal. So the Saviour is not only the food, but the medicine of the soul: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, who healeth all thy diseases," &c. And how does he do this? By infusing the influence of his own life and the power of his Holy Spirit. We never for a moment dream of supporting our bodies without food; O then let us never lose sight of that heavenly bread, by which the energy and vigour of the spiritual life can alone be maintained!

SERMON VI.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE.

ROMANS viii. 2.

“ For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

THE apostle, in the first verse, says—“ There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” In the 7th chapter he had given an interesting account of his own experience, the experience of a man of God, from his first conviction of sin till he triumphs completely in the Lord Jesus Christ; the experience of one who was conscious of the presence of sin in his bosom, and equally conscious of the presence of a covenant God subduing the enemy. It has afforded the richest relief to many of the Lord's family, and will continue to do so. The

first verse echoes a truth nearly as old as the fall of our first parents ; for soon after they fell Jesus visited them, and preached the gospel to them. This was the truth preached by Noah to the Antediluvian world, and which that world rejected ; the truth which pervades the whole of the Old Testament. The Jewish types and shadows were full of it. The prophets dwelt on the same triumphant truth ; and the saints of God in all ages have experienced its mighty effects, triumphing in it over all their enemies : “ Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered ; blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” The apostle dwells here on the same triumphant truth, and presents it to the church of God.

How rich is the covenant of God ! He has provided for us from eternity, every thing we stand in need of—a righteousness to justify us, and his own holy image to beautify us for ever. We cannot have one without the other. We must have both, or we must die without either, and be miserable, because sinful, for ever. The apostle was so grateful for the blessings he received, that he seems to have introduced himself almost without being conscious of it. He says, not “ *you*,” but under the influence of intense gratitude to the Almighty, “ The

law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made *me* free from the law of sin and death." This is divine egotism, involving his own humility in all the glories of a covenant God.

I. Consider the law of sin. The apostle expresses himself in a peculiar manner. Sin is not a single act. Wherever sin is evinced in one act, it lives as a principle. It takes eternal possession of the transgressor the moment he violates the law of God. Need I descend to hell to bring back the history of devils and lost spirits? By no means. The volume of inspiration is before us; and if we are individually under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, we shall know the awful truth in knowing ourselves. Sin, in the human bosom, is a mighty monarch, or rather tyrant, whom none can contend with and conquer but the Almighty. This tyrant issues his commands, and is invariably obeyed by the transgressor, unless God interpose. To know what sin is, and to be delivered from it, is heaven begun on earth. If the command of sin falls in with any favourite propensity, the tyrant is obeyed. Sometimes it issues its commands to sin against God, merely for the sake of the pleasure there is in transgression, when the sinner himself is not to be gratified in the least degree: sin is such a monster that the eloquence

of God alone can give a correct idea of it ; no pencil but that of God alone can give a full and faithful portrait of it.

Consider the law of God, and what sin does in opposition to it. The apostle Paul knew this ; he had learned the awful truth in perusing his own heart. It is evident, from the 7th chapter, that he was well trained and disciplined before he was commissioned to preach to others. God led him into the inmost recesses of his own bosom, and showed him the most frightful and formidable object he could see : “ Sin taking occasion of the commandment deceived me, and by it slew me.” This teaches us the awful truth in which we are all eminently interested, that the tyrant sin issues his commands in exact proportion as we discover the holiness and purity of the law of God. Sin says, “ Oppose it.” Its purity presents itself in new glories. Sin says, “ Oppose it still ; persevere in fighting against the Almighty in all the glories of his legislation ; laugh at all his curses, and sin on.” Such is the monster which inhabits our own hearts. The secret of true religion is first in knowing ourselves as sinners. It has been said of a minister, who was called the Apostle of Wales, that before he ever unfolded the glories of the gospel, he was invariably an executioner ; death, and destruction pervaded the hearts of all

his hearers, and then he seemed to ascend to heaven to bring down the Redeemer in all his glories—'twas heaven itself to hear him preach. So St. Paul had learned what sin was; and this accounts for the triumphant joy with which he travelled to many countries, carrying his life in his hand, and presenting sinners with a faithful portrait of themselves, and then with the Saviour.

But is this all that can be said of transgression? By no means. We should not be so much surprised that a criminal, under the influence of a hard heart, should curse the judge who consigns him to the gallows; but we should be much surprised to find a criminal, to whom the king sends a reprieve, spurning it, and cursing the sovereign on his throne. It is not in hell that we behold sin in all its deformity: sin in hell has not a God of mercy to fight against. It is on earth that we behold the monster sin in all its enmity against God. When the gospel is proclaimed to man, unless the Holy Spirit change the heart, the tyrant issues his edict—"Curse God, despise his commands and invitations, laugh at his heaven and his hell." Where are we to learn these things as we ought? In our own bosoms individually—there only can we learn them. These are most salutary exercises of mind to the true believer, who is

thoroughly conscious of his interest in his Redeemer; to enhance his love and gratitude to that God who sent his Son to die under the curse of his violated law, to redeem sinners first, and then to save them for ever.

II. The law of death—that is the punishment of sin; the curse due to the transgressor. Sin comprises its own punishment wherever found; and in what will it consist? In the presence of a God of justice: every sin will have the punishment due to it. Neither the commands nor curses of God's holy law emanate from the sovereignty of God, but from the essential holiness of the Creator and Governor of the universe. The punishment of sin will be tremendous in the extreme—terrible beyond description; while the sinner will be his own executioner. He will have two executioners, God first, then himself; and how will God punish him? In every blow he gives himself. Nothing is more absurd or blasphemous than to talk of the deliverance of devils and lost spirits, for it impeaches the law of God. What is the sinner engaged in in hell? In sinning; the effect of the punishment is to harden the heart continually in sinning. Consider what the nature of sin is, and learn it from the natural history of its symbol, the serpent. The serpent is

said to grow while it lives ; sin is growing in hell ; it fattens on the fuel of divine vengeance ; it catches the thunderbolts of the Almighty, and throws them back to him : but they return to the bosom of the sinner, armed with new vengeance from the bosom of God. This is hell. These things must live, not only as feelings in the bosom, but as principles. When God winds up all things, and brings his various dispensations, as it were, to one focus, he will say to his enemies—"Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" and to his friends—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance;" it will be a day of joy, because God avengeth himself of his enemies. "The Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God who is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness."

Is there a transgressor here who is a stranger to a covenant God? In the name of the Saviour who wept over Jerusalem—who on the cross said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," I invite him to the fountain which has been opened for sin and for uncleanness, that he may wash, and drink, and live for ever.

III. The law of the Spirit of life.

The gospel is called the law of the Spirit for two reasons.

1. Because God is a legislator as well as a sovereign in his mercy.

2. The Holy Spirit accompanies his own truth into the human heart.

The gospel is the medium which is made use of by the Holy Spirit to make us "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Some preach parts and portions of the gospel, as if God were exclusively a sovereign: though it may be blessed to the salvation of some, yet it is pregnant with destruction to others: it is impossible to save a ruined soul without meeting God as a legislator as well as a sovereign. He is both; and we are only to live as that we may die under the influence of this truth. Saints and angels live under its influence, and so must we.

The gospel, both in the Old and New Testament, is called a law. "His delight is in the *law* of the Lord," in the whole truth of God. "A *law* shall go forth out of Zion." The Saviour is a king, and where is there a king without a law? To dream of sovereign blessings and to forget the legislative glories of the King of kings is a dangerous and delusive dream. The gospel comprises every truth necessary for man to know. We behold the goodness and mercy of God fully

as conspicuous in the mission of the Holy Spirit as in the mission of Jesus Christ. Why does the divine Spirit communicate sovereign blessings to man? That he may teach and strengthen him to meet God eventually, in all his legislative glories as well as in all his sovereign blessings. In what circumstances are the spirits of just men made perfect at the present moment? They are in the presence of one who confers on them the richest sovereign blessings; of a God whose legislative glory in their government, was and is far more splendid than in the government of angels, or of our first parents before they transgressed.

“The law of the Spirit of life.” Here is the triumphant consolation of the believer; he sometimes goes through painful discipline; he seems chained to himself, and obliged to view himself in all his perverseness. This discipline cannot be described; but the individual who has undergone it can better conceive it than by a verbal description. It is a useful discipline to the believer to drive him to himself—to humble him in the dust—to drive him downward, as the cold winter does the sap;—to destroy the tree? no: but to strengthen its roots and promote its growth under ground, where no human eye can witness it, that the sap may afterwards ascend to the branches, that they may bear not only leaves but rich fruit. None but one who has expe-

rienced it can tell what it is to live in a night of spiritual desertion, with only one companion, and that the worst which can be found—himself. This, perhaps, is the experience of some here—yours is a season of prayer: wait on the Lord: adopt not the language of those who say, Surely never was poor soul distressed as I am; I cannot tell you my fears and sufferings; the flames of hell seem to flash in my face. Now if I am asked, “What is the evidence, in this deep distress, of spiritual life in the soul?” I answer, a profound hatred of sin. The believer says, “I hate this abominable sin:”—here is the vigour of the tree, the root is growing; the sun of heaven will visit it: it will appear soon in new glories, covered with fruit so rich, that the hand of Deity will gather it for ever.

IV. Consider the blessing. Free from the law of sin and death; free from the condemnation and dominion of sin; free from every curse; free from every charge; free from the holy law of God as a covenant; free as Messiah himself. If this be not true, what the apostle says in the first verse could not be true. Was there any condemnation for the Saviour after he rose? No. Is there any for him who believes in the Saviour? No. He is as free from condemnation as Messiah himself was when he rose from the dead. In what consists the freedom of his humanity

now? In his intense and delightful obedience to the will of God. There is no true freedom to be found but in the freedom of God; in obedience to his holy will. True liberty is the liberty of the Son of God in every respect; freedom from the condemnation of sin, from its dominion, and from its tyranny.

This freedom involves in it a state of warfare. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other." It opposes itself to every thing opposed to God internally and externally. Are we thus free? Are we interested in Christ Jesus? Have we a good hope through grace; amounting sometimes to a consciousness, that we shall be in heaven shortly? Where does this live? Its element is the freedom I have spoken of. Some are shocked when they hear any one say they are certain of being in heaven. I dare not dispute their testimony; but I would inquire on what ground does it rest? If their religion correspond with St. Paul's, I would say, "Triumph on, begin the song of heaven on earth." An individual once said, he had lived fifty years without a doubt; but he was a holy man, a man of God; so that all who knew him would confess that his life evinced the truth of what he said. If he had been as old as Methuselah, and had lived nine hundred

years, without a doubt, he would have been fully authorized to say, if he had opened his heart to receive all the blessings of God, and had lived ceaselessly in the glorious freedom of the children of God. True religion is its element, and if so, a consciousness of safety must be so likewise. The liberty of true religion is the parent of every other liberty. The liberty of the Saviour's humanity has been spoken of. If we ascend to the freedom of God, it consists in honouring his own glorious perfections, the source of freedom. May God confer on us this freedom !

In conclusion :—

Contrast it with the voluntary slavery of men. Man is the slave of a slave ; because the slave of Satan by nature, led captive by him at his will.

You who know this freedom, prize it more and more ; never forget that the God who first imparted it must preserve it through all the periods of time, and keep it alive in heaven. God himself is the element of all proper freedom.

Consider the believer under the influence of this truth—patient, loyal, a valuable member of society ; contrast him in the several relations of society with others of an opposite character : here we learn to estimate true freedom ; for

“ He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,
And all are slaves besides.”

SERMON VII.

ON THE PEACE ON GOD.

JOHN XX. 21.

“Peace be unto you.”

“THEN the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.” The disciples must have been glad indeed when they saw the Lord—Peter had denied him, and the rest all forsook him, and fled. After every fear had subsided of being punished with him, sorrow and self-reproach must have possessed their hearts. When they first saw the Saviour they must have anticipated a severe reproof; but they heard nothing of the kind. He knew the bitter discipline they must

have undergone, and said, "Peace be unto you." Perhaps there are some whose bosoms are filled with sorrow and self-reproach in consequence of their ingratitude to their Saviour and their God—filled with sorrow and shame, while they are apprehensive that they have no interest in the covenant of God. My trembling brother or sister, the Saviour who spoke peace to the disciples, speaks peace to thee. Will you receive the blessing? The disciples did so, and this is the best proof of our being previously in a state of mind to receive it. The Saviour knew his disciples well, and the human heart is the same now that it was then. Sin, and sorrow, and the grace of God, have invariably the same effects. The Saviour says to his sorrowing family, "Peace be unto you."

I. Peace is universally the *gift of God*, wherever found. "He maketh peace in his high places." This blessing is not conferred once only; it ceaselessly flows from God. There is a tendency in finite being to destroy not only itself but others. What a mercy that the hand of God is upon us. "In famine he shall redeem thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword." "He maketh men to be of one mind in an house." Turn over the pages of the natural history of man; you find nothing but what is

hateful. It is well to notice this, that we may live in habitual gratitude to God for every thing. If we ascend to heaven, to the angelic host, peace among them is the creation of God. When he called them into existence, and afterwards our first parents, peace was the blessing he conferred upon them; and it lives in his own image.

II. Peace, wherever found, is preserved by God. As it is originally conferred on all who possess it, so it is subsequently preserved, by God. Destruction is the element of a finite being; if left to itself, it begins with destroying the greatest excellency, the image of the Almighty. Its first attack is on this holy image, because it is more like God than any thing else. Sin seeks the destruction of universal being; it would pull down the sun from the firmament, the planets from their spheres—it would dethrone the God of heaven and earth. Sin is exclusively the child of finite being; properly speaking, it is the only offspring of finite being—the only thing we can claim as exclusively our own. Make a wise and holy use of this awful truth—a truth necessary to be seen, and known, and felt, that we may prize the blessings reserved for us in the bosom of God. In the crucifixion of the Lord of glory we read this truth in all the light of the sun.

III. The peace conferred by God on man is the most glorious peace. It involves a glory to which the peace that inhabits the bosoms of innocent beings is a stranger—it has been purchased by the sufferings of one who is God. What finite being can make God a debtor? Is there any created intelligence in heaven that ever has made, or will make, God a debtor? Impossible. Surely then no one can who is a sinner. See how far legality is removed from true religion; as far as licentiousness: indeed when we analyze both, we find them involved in, and identified with, one another. In the light of this truth the leading doctrines of grace, the Deity of the Son of God, and the doctrine of the Trinity, become of paramount importance; and we learn the impossibility of the existence of true religion without them. If man is to be saved, one must be found who can first become a debtor to Deity, and then make Deity a debtor to him. These two things are necessary. Consider the doctrine of the Trinity, the eternal covenant of a triune Jehovah; and then you find the glorious doctrine just spoken of, flowing into *experimental*, and *practical*, piety. These are the uses we are called on, by the truth and Spirit of Jehovah, to make of this doctrine. We know that light is eminently beautiful, and the parent of countless beauties; and yet we know little of it, though we stand in

need of it perpetually. The peasant knows as much of light, for every practical purpose, as the scientific Newton. It is thus we must know God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the covenant of eternity the Son became a debtor to the Father, a debtor to his command and to his curse. This is the reason why he descended from heaven to earth, and sojourned here three and thirty years. He was a debtor to the Father during the whole tenor of his life; till he cried out "*It is finished,*" "the chastisement of our peace was upon him." Consider another divine person a debtor. The Father to the Son, owing him a family, and all the blessings necessary to preserve it in purity and bliss for ever. These things are true, according to the express declaration of Jehovah. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

There is an infinite dignity in the religion of Jesus when traced to all its sources. Its sources are—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the Son in all the glories of his obedience and sacrifice; the Father in all the glory of his perfections, in becoming a debtor to the Son, and his faithfulness in discharging that debt. All these things are necessary, first to purchase, and then to establish eternal peace, in the bosom of one who is a transgressor. Can true religion,

then, live in the bosom of one who denies the Deity of Jesus, and the doctrine of a Trinity? We should not only view crimes with horror; we should be equally shocked with errors in principle, more dangerous, because more subtle and seductive, than vice in practice, while they lead to destruction as their awful consequence. Has one person in Jehovah become indebted to another to purchase and establish peace in my conscience—is one now indebted to another? Then I may ascend far above all my own unworthiness, and see that it is worthy of God to have compassion on such an unworthy being. I may ascend from my own deserts and undeservings, and grasping his own glories, say, “For the sake of all of them have mercy on me; for thy name’s sake deliver me from all mine enemies.” You may be weeping over your sins; remember God says, “for mine own sake.” What is there to secure this peace, and bring it from heaven to earth—from the bosom of God to man? The Holy Spirit has covenanted from eternity, because a voluntary debtor to the Father and the Son, to see that all his family receive the blessing, and to preserve it alive in them for ever.

This, then, is the triumphant use of the doctrine of the Trinity; and of the engagements of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, from eternity, to raise those who are naturally dead in trespasses

and sins ; to quicken them to a life of righteousness ; and to teach them to look to a future resurrection from death, that in body and soul they may be holy and happy with the Lord for ever. “ The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; ” one blessing follows another—first righteousness, then peace, then joy. No more than this can be said of the kingdom of God in heaven ; surely then no more can be said of it on earth.

Lastly. This peace is conferred on one who is a rebel. It was provided in the covenant of eternity for one who is a rebel. Those measures were entered into which are absolutely necessary to purchase this peace, to bestow it, and to preserve it alive in the heart for ever. In Hebrews viii. 12, the apostle evidently dwells on blessings common to Jews and Gentiles. He says nothing to the Jews of returning to their own land. It is remarkable that this prince or monarch of divines, taught the Jews what was of immediate necessity, the very truths they then wanted. In their extreme degradation it would have probably been very gratifying for them to hear that they were to return to Jerusalem ; but not a syllable does the apostle tell them of this. He dwells on those truths which were absolutely necessary then to keep their souls alive and in union and communion with Deity. Not that we are to be

inattentive to future blessings, for there are such ; but whether we think of happiness present or future let it be spiritual. We shall know the Lord, and reign with him—we shall not only be renewed in the Spirit of our minds, but in our bodies likewise.

The remission of sins is the great blessing of which both Jews and Gentiles stand in need. Another necessarily connected with it, is justification by faith. Faith only justifies as it receives the blessing freely and fully at the hands of God. We are justified by faith only as we receive the blessing at the hands of God, and in obedience to his authority. God does not justify exclusively as a sovereign ; and this exposes the absurdity of justification from eternity. It is an impossibility. God justifies as a legislator as well as a sovereign. If these things are borne in mind they will enable us to unravel many difficult passages, and see the sense in which they should be taken.

“ Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God.” This peace leads to joy. The disciples must, in great measure, have lost the consciousness of that peace which the Lord bequeathed to them before his death ; but “ the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”—“ It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed.”—“ I, the Lord, change not ; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” The unchanging love

and faithfulness of God visited his disciples. This rich blessing involves every other. Heaven is only a developement of this peace of God himself, in all his love and glory. It is so perfect, that nothing can be added to it—so glorious, that no terms are too strong to designate it. It involves and is involved in the peace of God. When we consider him as a judge, he is as much at peace with his own family as with his own Son, and with his own perfections.

To apply the subject in five particulars.

1. Is any one an entire stranger to this peace? A congregation presents a most interesting spectacle. The angel of death will shortly separate us from each other. As soon as we close our eyes in death, our destinies are eternally sealed. If there should be only one in this congregation a stranger to a covenant God! The idea is exquisitely painful. If you are a stranger to God and to peace, remember what you must be engaged in shortly, and that for ever, if you die without an interest in Christ—in fighting against God through the countless ages of eternity. How awful the idea, that any one of the human family should wilfully and madly leap down the precipice of eternity, daring the wrath of God for ever! and yet this is the case with numbers in our own country.

2. I would address those who possess this

peace. Prize it, and triumph in it, as the gift of God. Consider its concomitants, or rather attributes. Read this peace in itself, in its fruits and effects, in Job, Isaiah, and Paul. What a sense they had of their own unworthiness; and yet they realized the peace of God in the conscience. They ascended far above all considerations of their own unworthiness, to the bosom of a covenant God, and knew that he saved for his own name's sake. Job speaks of himself with humility; but after he had been tried and disciplined by the Lord in the furnace of affliction—after he had been obliged to read the most difficult of all books—the human heart—and had perused what must have filled him with horror and surprise, he says, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee.” (Job xlii. 5, 6.) Isaiah says, “Woe is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips.” And Paul, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!” It is particularly to be noticed, in this apostle's experience, that nothing seemed to grieve him but sin. He thinks not of the malice of men or devils, but only of a corrupt heart. This is repentance after a godly sort; this is the repentance not to be repented of, which brings the finest feelings into the human heart—feelings which inhabit the bosom of Emma-

nuel. Hear him speaking of his enemies : "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans viii. 35—39.) He martials all the armies of heaven, earth, and hell, and heaves not one sigh in their presence; but when he dwells on his own heart, then, and then only, does he weep. O God, give us the spirit of the apostle, that we may know what true religion is, in consequence of experiencing it in our own bosoms!

3. This peace (if it may be personified) is the greatest warrior—an invincible warrior: all enemies invariably fall before it: it is the greatest warrior next to Emmanuel; destined to conquer what nothing else can—the strongholds of Satan. It carries on a ceaseless warfare in the human bosom with every thing that exalts itself against God, and then marches forth to fight against sin

in others. This peace enables us to conquer the most potent and subtle enemy—*self*; and in that conquest, to anticipate, on scriptural ground, an eternal victory over all enemies.

4. I would address those who were once conscious of possessing this peace, but have lost that consciousness. This is the case in many instances. Do you inquire the cause? Have you not grieved the Spirit of the living God? Call not these things legal: they are absolutely necessary to preserve alive that religion in the human heart in which God himself delights to dwell. Are you in the habit of living in the commission of any thing contrary to the will of God? There is no peace while you are serving idols. Throw them away to the moles and to the bats. Approach the Saviour in this manner, and he will, in due time, re-establish in you the consciousness of his own friendship. If you are not conscious of having grieved the Holy Spirit by rebellion; descend deeper into the deceitful human heart, and ask, Has pride not been gathering strength here silently, and preying on the soul, while the soul has not been conscious of it? This is a good reason why the Holy Spirit should be grieved, and withhold the consciousness of peace. Visit a throne of grace, and persevere in praying to God, to bless the painful dispensation, this night of the soul, in which the believer must

mourn the absence of his God; and pray for growth in humility, and every other grace, till Jesus visits you again, and says, "Peace be unto you."

5. This peace lives only in God. Its element is Jehovah. This lesson forces itself on us—Seek God perpetually. His blessings live only in himself. Seek him as your portion, your prophet, your priest, your king, your all. Let this be your comprehensive prayer:—Give me thyself, O God, as my portion; and may I be thine for evermore. And his peace, which passeth knowledge, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

SERMON VIII.

THE INVITATION OF THE GOSPEL.

ISAIAH xlv. 22.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else."

THE words of the text, in the first instance, were addressed to the Jews in a state of captivity. They were addressed to them, not merely as a spiritual church, but as a professing church; and

we should always bear this in mind, that no church is addressed as simply and exclusively spiritual. The church of God is addressed as a church, in consequence of professing to be the church of God. The Jews were scattered at the time the prophet was directed to address them thus—"Look unto me, and be ye saved." There was presented to them a temporal deliverance; and not only this, but a spiritual deliverance also. They are a scattered people at the present day, and the text will reach them in due time. In another point of view, the words may be considered as addressed to sinners, to every individual to whom the gospel is preached; and ever remember that the gospel is primarily preached to a sinner as such, not as an elect sinner. When he is brought to know his interest in the Redeemer's atonement, he will be addressed as an elect sinner; but in the first instance, simply as a transgressor. Do not suffer yourselves to be robbed of this important truth. It is of great service to the believer of many years standing. He may be depressed under heavy evils, and exposed to severe temptations; he may be driven to this extremity, that he has nothing to plead but that he is a sinner. Jesus is a Saviour to the uttermost. The gospel is addressed to a sinner as such, and the believer, however severely he is exercised, may still consi-

der the gospel addressed to him as a sinner. Granting that the Saviour died in a peculiar manner for his church ; yet his sacrifice is infinite, and the universal address to sinners is founded on the infinite work of his atonement ; for this reason, those who have heard the gospel and rejected its truths, will meet eventually at the bar of God with the most awful condemnation.

If we peruse this text in the light of other passages of Scripture, we shall be immediately obliged to confess that the words flow from the lips of Jesus Christ. “ I have spoken by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” Compare this with the parallel passage in the Corinthians, “ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father ;” compare it with what the baptist said when he directed the attention of the Jews to Messiah, “ Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” It is imagined by some that John was a legalist. By no means. He understood the gospel well, and preached it faithfully. It is true he preached repentance ; and where is the minister that will faithfully discharge his

commission without so doing? Did John preach repentance as a Saviour? By no means; but only as involving in it a disposition to receive a Saviour; and in this he agreed with the doctrine taught by all the inspired penmen, both of the Old and New Testament. The Saviour speaking of himself, says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up;" and again in the twelfth chapter he says, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Compare these few passages with the text, and we shall be obliged to confess that they proceed from the lips of Jesus Christ. He is the only appointed Saviour, the Saviour of those who lived and died under the Old Testament dispensation, as well as of those who live and die under the New Testament economy.

The points to which I would lead your attention are these,

I. That all have sinned.

II. That all who hear the gospel are welcome to return.

III. That though all are welcome, and the evil lies within the bosom of those who reject the invitation of God, yet he has a people, and he will make them willing in the day of his power.

I. All have sinned, all have gone astray ; in other words, all need a Saviour. All have wandered far from righteousness, and therefore from the paths of peace. The text implies it. If this were not true, where would be the propriety of the words, "Look unto me?" &c. If we peruse the pages of Scripture and compare them with what daily passes in review before our senses, we must come to the melancholy conclusion, that the whole of the human race is ruined. We all enter this world destitute of the spiritual image of the Almighty. The fall annihilated that image in Adam and in his posterity : all died in him.

Do not suppose that I mean to insinuate that man has lost every good : by no means. Man, without being possessed of the Holy Spirit, may do many things good in themselves. It is a good thing to be a loyal subject, a tender husband, an affectionate wife, an obedient child : and man may be good in these respects, while, at the same time, destitute of a single spark of positive virtue, — that virtue which raises man from the creature to the Creator ; from all below to God in Christ. Being in such a state, all stand in need of a Saviour. If not, why does the Saviour address them ? The most scriptural mode of interpreting these words is, as coming from the lips of the Saviour, when he died, suffering the just for the unjust. All mankind

are addressed by a God of mercy, in consequence of the sacrifice of his Son. All like sheep are gone astray ; all travel the broad road to destruction : there are many paths, but they all terminate at the same point. We must consider this as more than mere speculative truth : ourselves are not to be excepted from this general ruin, this awful calamity. There is something, more or less, of this kind working in the breast of the most eminent saints on earth ; and by nature we are all on a level, without one exception : all have forsaken the Lord ; every individual has wandered as far from him as the Lord has suffered him to go. I appeal to conscience :—is not this the case, do we not feel this daily in our own sinfulness ? I fear I have injured my congregation and myself, by not dwelling sufficiently on the corruption of the human heart. It is a truth of great moment, not only in awakening the unconverted, but also to the believer ; for, unless we are daily living in the habit of coming into contact with our own sinfulness, recognizing the evil of our own hearts, and triumphing over it, through faith in Jesus, we cannot know what it is to live nigh to God. The idea of mercy, unless we suppose the ruin of man, is absurd in the extreme. The mercy of God implies that man is wholly fallen ; and it is an absurdity to suppose the contrary : no creature

has fallen partially. When angels fell, they forsook God wholly and for ever: and the defection of man was precisely the same. In what are the sons and daughters of Adam engaged? They are treading in the steps of their first parents. They complain, as of old, "our fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." But how thoughtless, how weak, how unjust to the Almighty, is this! Give me leave to ask you,—Why do you delight in similar transgression? Could you prove that you hate sin, and count it as an abominable thing, the argument would be good; but unhappily this complaint is made by those who delight to tread the path of the first rebel.

II. The second thing to which I would lead your attention, is this:—That all who hear the gospel are welcome to return.

Beware of a contracted creed: its tendency is to give you contracted views of the divine perfections, and to harden the heart. I am speaking now of the Arminian, the hyper-calvinistic, and Antinomian errors: each is injurious. Let us have courage to follow God, and nobly emancipate ourselves from human systems, or we shall only behold the Sun of Righteousness through a mist,—shorn of its beams, shorn of its glory, by the fogs of a sinful atmosphere. Is it

possible to suppose that a sinner is not addressed in the word of God as a sinner? I could not have believed it, if persons had not declared it in my presence. Oh! it is robbing God of his legislative glory; it is robbing God of the justness of his sacrifice; and it is robbing the creature of the perpetual sense of his own responsibility to God. Little do such individuals think that the shafts of error are flying from their own bosoms towards God above, and, at the same time, aiming at the destruction of the human race: for this is the tendency of all error. "Look unto me," &c. There is not an individual within these walls to whom the words are not addressed. Do you and I feel this truth,—That there is nothing between God and man, whenever the gospel is preached, but what lies within the human bosom—there is nothing in Jehovah, to drive us from him? The whole of the evil lies within the bosom of the transgressor. What an awful thing will it be in another world, when the irretrievable sentence of eternal death is gone forth, to look back upon the innumerable opportunities, when so great a salvation was affectionately offered, and obstinately rejected.

Consider the rich welcome that the returning prodigal experiences. God commands, God invites him; and the welcome which he gives, in consequence of his command and invitation, is in-

finitely worthy of himself. In perusing the work of his hand, and attending to the economy of his providence, all he does is perfection in its kind, and worthy of himself. But it is in his gospel, in the dispensation of his mercy, that we discover every thing that is calculated to delight and astonish the human mind. Limited as the capacity of man is, there is that in the immortal soul which nothing can fill but the blessings and truths of God's holy covenant. There is something so vast in the human soul, that God himself must inhabit it in all his glory. Granted that, in one sense, we cannot think too lowly of ourselves, there is another sense in which we cannot think too highly; and true humility comprises both. God gives us truth in his word in every possible instructive manner. We are taught in plain simple terms, that we are sinners; and that state is a state of misery. All creation seems to be inspired; and God seems to give his own tongue to his creatures, to teach us, figuratively, that we are transgressors, and that he is a God of mercy. In the midst of all my unworthiness, I am welcome to God in Christ. The sacrifice which is offered, has all the worthiness which I stand in need of. Bring all the arguments of hell against me, and the sum total is this,—That I stand in need of Jesus. “Look unto me, and be ye saved. Come unto

me, and I will give you rest." The pardon of every sin; protection from every foe; supply for every want; the Spirit to guide; strength to sustain; the faithfulness of God to keep you; and his holiness and bliss to be your portion for ever.

III. The third thing is this—That though all are welcome, and the evil lies within the bosom of those who reject the invitation of God, yet "he has a people, and he will make them willing in the day of his power." Who will come, and who ought to come, are two very different questions. May conscience solve them both within our bosoms! In the history of the Jews there is something peculiarly illustrative of this. A proclamation was sent to the Jews to return to their own country. Was there any thing deceitful or tantalising in this? By no means; yet it is a certain truth that numbers of them chose to remain. They had learned the habits of their enemies—they had contracted alliances with them. Whose fault was it, I ask a plain question, when the Lord invited all, that all did not accept the invitation; is there any one so presumptuous as to say the Lord was to blame? We dare not say it. Now this is illustrative of the invitation of the gospel. Those who chose to stay in Babylon, remained, because they loved their enemies,

preferred their customs and manners, and worshipped their idols; but others did return. So it is at the present moment. The gospel is an affectionate appeal to the consciences of all who hear it. Those who receive it with attention, and those who reject it, act precisely on the very principles of the Jews of old. At the same time, those who accept of it acknowledge that they have been influenced by the grace and Spirit of God to come unto him. How lovely is truth when considered in its comprehensive bearings! and we stand in need of it in every point of view each moment of time. Nothing less than the whole truth can produce a broken heart and a contrite spirit—a heart that lives from principle, constantly ascribing all good to God, and all evil to itself. Are there any thoughtless individuals present who have heard the gospel again and again; and would they know the reason why they treat it with contempt? The cause of their wilful rejection of it is in the wilful love of some darling lust, against which conscience has often protested. This is the reason why they receive it not—this is the principle whence all the mischief flows. May the Lord teach you and myself to pay the utmost reverence to every thing that comes from the lips of God.

What I lament, at the present day, is, that there are so few, like the prophet of old, to eat

the whole of the book—to welcome into their souls and digest every part and portion of the word of God. In the light of this truth, while it is the duty of all to return, and all are naturally indisposed, what a blessing it is that a sacrifice has not only been presented to the Father, but that that Spirit which enabled the Son himself to triumph over all his enemies, is engaged to enable the believer to triumph over his! What is the path the believer ought to tread? The path of humility, comprising a consciousness of his own inability to go on, for a single second of time, without the power of the Spirit; conscious of the provision which is made for him. “When I am weak then am I strong.” O sinner, come unto him: if you are a stranger to Jesus, pay some little attention to what he says of you and himself; remember continually that your own destruction, in all its aggravation, should you finally perish, will be entirely from yourself.

Consider the disposition of those who return to God, whether we view them as sinners newly awakened, or as backsliders convinced of their sinfulness and ingratitude, and brought back again by the Spirit of the living God. Man becomes sensible of his own transgression when his heart is melted by a sense of the loving-kindness of the Lord. When the transgressor is

truly ashamed of himself, you may rest assured that his Father is very near to him, that he is about to take him in his arms. The promise was given to Messiah that he should have the Spirit without measure to communicate to his redeemed ; and this is absolutely necessary. Repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are the attributes of the new man. The principle, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit, evinces itself in this way. The work is carried on by the Spirit of the living God, even when our hearts are quarrelling with the discipline. The natural insensibility of the human heart, the proneness of man to return to his natural state, were it possible for God to forsake him, and the daily conflict we have with corruption, are not intended to drive us into despondency, but to teach us humility. God forgives, God justifies, God sanctifies, the sinner ; and eventually annihilates sin. And what do faith and repentance do ? They receive the blessing.

“ Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” All is immediately right as soon as we behold Jesus. A view of him by faith regulates every thing. We see something like this in the natural sun ; it has a tendency to make every thing like itself ; and this is eminently true of the Sun of Righteousness. How delightful, how simple is true religion, when we

enter into its spirit! David says, "My sin is ever before me," and he triumphed when he wrote these words: remember that the reason was because the sacrifice too was always before him. Did he look at sin exclusively? No; he viewed it as imputed to the great Mediator. What was the consequence? A triumph over sin.

Lastly. Looking to Jesus is the daily, hourly, ceaseless work of the believer, or it ought to be. We all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image. And the Saviour of men, when addressing his disciples, says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." It is as necessary that the work should be completed as that it should be begun. Let us lay aside every weight. It is in beholding Jesus we learn the command and curse of the law, as well as the gospel. We learn every thing connected with the doctrine of light in beholding the natural sun; so every thing in connexion with the purity of the truth, is learned in beholding the Sun of Righteousness. "I am the light of the world." Mark the believer, who is intimately acquainted with himself; who for a series of years has been following on to know the Lord; fix your eye on him who is ripening for glory: he hangs down his head, not as a bulrush, but like an ear of corn, courting the

sickle ; not in despondency, but in humility ; and while his eye is fixed upon the ground, in another respect he is beholding the Lamb of God, and is changed into the same image only preparatory to beholding him for ever in heaven, without one sigh, one tear. There the bliss of Messiah will continue to flow, in one eternal tide, into the bosom of his glorified brethren.

You who have been brought to God from a worse than Babylonish captivity, remember your continual dependence upon him. Do not suppose that because you have enjoyed a most delightful sense of the presence of God, that is enough to enable you to go on. Do not deceive yourselves. The Lord only gives us a sense of his presence to encourage us to follow him, to wait on him continually, in moments of darkness, distress, and desertion ; not to puff us up with pride, but to convince us that all our springs in life, death, and eternity, are in him.

SERMON IX.

THE TENDER MERCY OF GOD.

LUKE i. 78, 79.

“ Through the tender mercy of our God ; whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace.”

THIS is a very interesting portion of divine writ. It is part of the triumphant song of Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, embracing not only the birth of his own son, but likewise Messiah himself, with all the blessings which he descended to impart to the fallen sons and daughters of Adam.

Zechariah had disbelieved the promise announced by the angel Gabriel, that a son should be born to him ; and I have often reminded you of the folly of reasoning when God speaks. It is not the province of reason to attempt to deny any thing that he asserts ; on the contrary, it is the wisdom of reason to believe, and to bow, with

the most profound submission, at the foot of his throne. His truth will afford a richer feast for reason than all the arts and sciences, or any thing that has ever been devised by man. This feast involves himself in all the glory of his perfections. Zechariah says, "How shall I know these things? He was made to know them—he was struck dumb till the angel's prophecy was fulfilled; his lips were then opened, and he begins in this triumphant strain: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." He anticipated the future blessings with which the world was to be visited, in consequence of the birth and triumph of the Saviour of mankind: "That we should be saved from our enemies," evidently from spiritual enemies primarily, "to perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember his holy covenant."

God does everything in faithfulness to himself. He remembers his holy covenant—he remembers himself in all his glory, and in that remembrance is mindful of man. It would be too much for us to believe this truth, had it not been established by the authority of God himself: had we not known, from historical evidence, and from the lips of individuals themselves, that those who were most devoted to sin and Satan, have been plucked as

brands from the burning, have been renewed in the spirit of their minds, have been united to Christ, and are now flourishing in eternal verdure and fertility before the throne of God above. We see the spirituality, the integrity, and the source of the saint's joy. The oath which he swore unto our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, "that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Wisdom will invariably teach the sons and daughters of God to seek, as the primary and most valuable blessing, deliverance from the hands of spiritual enemies—from the guilt and tyranny of sin, looking forward to deliverance from its very existence. That deliverance involves in it perfect and eternal freedom from every thing that is or can be painful to our feelings. In triumphing over sin, we triumph over every other foe.

"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest." At the close of the Old Testament dispensation, a promise was given that Elias should come, and, according to our Lord, John was that Elias, teaching the Jewish nation to recognize Messiah as their king. "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins." John

truly preached the law that condemned man ; but he also set forth the Saviour that was to deliver him.

This period may justly be called the dawn of the Sun of Righteousness, as we sometimes see the light of the sun, before he actually ascends above the horizon. John the Baptist not only beheld this light, but, in prophetic vision, travelled into futurity, and taught the church of God a song which they may well adopt, and sing to the end of time.

“ Through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us.” The first thing that solicits our attention in this passage is,

The mercy of Jehovah.

Mercy, a most essential attribute in God, and, like every thing else that inhabits Deity, infinite and eternal. It is the developement of this attribute that exhibits all the perfections of God in their full splendour. Angels in a state of innocence could have no idea of the mercy of God. When some of them fell from their glorious estate, neither those who fell, nor those who remained in a state of primitive innocence, could have anticipated any thing like mercy in God. This was infinitely beyond their ken. Mercy, notwithstanding the glory that God had evinced before, must have remained an eternal secret in

his own bosom, had he not been pleased himself to make it known. Mercy could not develop itself to innocent beings. Love might, and even in this we are amazed, when we consider the perfections of God—this infinitely glorious peculiarity in the Divine Being—that love as it inhabits his bosom finds every thing worthy of itself within the bosom of Deity, and this cannot be said of any other existence. We wonder at this ; but new glories present themselves to our attention in meditating on the mercy of God. Satan triumphed in one respect in Eden, and sin extended its conquests to its utmost bounds. When Deity made himself known to our first parents in the person of Messiah, and pronounced a blessing which lives in all its glory in heaven at the present moment ; before he denounced the curse, what mingled emotions of joy and sorrow must have been excited within their breasts ! It is evident that they had a clear view of Messiah, and of their interest in him. Then mercy made itself known to angels of light, to the hosts of darkness, and to ruined man ; but man is eminently interested in this sublime blessing.

This was the first developement of these purposes of love and mercy, which had inhabited the bosom of Deity from the countless ages of eternity. In the Old and New Testament the

mercy of God is dwelt on in the most triumphant manner, and well it may be, for it involves all the divine perfections in the redemption and salvation of fallen man. Yes, our God is merciful ! “ Have mercy upon me,” says the psalmist, “ according to thy loving kindness.” It is the blessing that pursues the church of God continually, and preserves her from destruction. “ It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, they are new every morning ; great is thy faithfulness.” It is mercy that preserves us every moment. It is mercy that must follow and preserve us till the day of death, for “ goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.” And it is mercy in all its prolific blessings and effects, that preserves the saints of light at this moment in all the glories of bliss. If asked to define mercy, my answer would be this ; that it comprises every thing that is absolutely necessary to make sinful man eminently holy, and, as a necessary consequence, eminently happy. Happiness without holiness is an absolute impossibility ; it cannot be communicated to any being. When God makes a sinful being happy he invariably first makes him holy. It is love, then, that embraces sinful man ; love in its most glorious exercise, surrounding humanity in all its shame and degradation. It is pity that embraces man in all his misery, and this is most emphatically de-

signated the bowels of our God. We know that tenderness inhabits the human bosom; love and pity, though utterly incomprehensible to us, inhabit the bosom of God in all their glory, and develope themselves in the bosom of humanity like our own, in human feelings in the highest exercise of their intenseness. Follow Jesus when he wept over Jerusalem, over their temporal as well as their eternal destruction—listen to him when he says on the cross, in the midst of his agonizing sufferings, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!” These are infinitely glorious realities as inhabiting the bosom of God; but let it be ever remembered, they can reach and be applied to us only through one who is man like ourselves.

Men have very little conception of the feelings of mothers; but our Lord knew more than a mother’s feeling. When Solomon, in his wisdom, foreseeing the issue, commanded a sword to be brought, and the living child to be divided, the spring of maternal affection was touched by the master hand—exquisitely did it respond; but what were these feelings compared with the sympathies of Deity in visiting—who? sons? daughters? friends? No! enemies in open rebellion against him? “God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Listen to the prayers of the church ; the prayer of those who are conscious that mercy, in all its living, eternal glory, inhabits no bosom but that of Deity. “ Look down from heaven and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory : where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me ? are they restrained ? Doubtless, thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not : thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting.”

It was in the advent of John, and afterwards in the advent of Messiah, that the bosom of God was thrown open, and every possible proof given of God's love to sinful man, that love in all its glorious dimensions involving the dimensions of the love that embraces himself. O how happy they must be in heaven ! their capacities so wonderfully sublimed, that they can enter into these subjects with the most intense delight, at the same time unaccompanied by the least weariness. John the Baptist was only the herald and messenger of Messiah, the morning star, that shone in the dawn of that eternal sun which illumined the spiritual hemisphere of his church, and will continue to shed his splendid beams upon her through an eternal day.

The proof then of the mercy of God, consists in three things—

In the incarnation, obedience and death of his Son—all inseparably connected; and we cannot do justice to one without taking the whole into consideration. The Saviour had been announced to the church as the Sun of Righteousness. “To you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” “Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” The mercy and judgment of the Lord, as set forth in this passage, were most conspicuously displayed, when Jesus visited our earth, and in the period immediately subsequent. We find, in perusing the New Testament, a perfect fulfilment of this prophecy. There were some waiting for the consolation of Israel, some who faintly beheld his glory in the types and shadows, and who were prepared by faith, and the discipline of the divine Spirit, to look to him; and when he came they beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

It is said of the ancient Persians, that they worshipped the sun, and that they waited for him every morning, and paid their devotions just at the moment he rose above the horizon. We may well weep over such folly. But Scripture

directs our attention to the Sun of righteousness. We find all who knew him worshipping him without exception ; “ and again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him.” Deity worshipped by angels. Yes, and humanity too.

When the wise men of the east came, they brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh, the most precious things they had, and offered them, evidently in testimony of their devotion. But they had presented him *first* with a more valuable offering—they had given their hearts. How must they have been gratified, when they beheld the Saviour of mankind : they saw his spiritual glory when lying in a manger. O may our hearts be like the stable—not like the inn—for there was no room in the inn for Jesus. Messiah was rejected, to make room for richer guests. All the creatures of God are good, and the different grades of society are blessings ; these are not to be despised, but on the contrary, to be honoured and respected. But when these distinctions are opposed to the majesty of the Most High, and the truth of his gospel, they immediately become pregnant with the most awful curse.

The history of good old Simeon will furnish us with a salutary hint how to spend our Christmas. May we follow his example, and spend it

with Jesus, in the full embrace of faith! If you spend it in any other way, your blood will not be required at my hands.

Lastly. Consider the blessings and consequences of the advent of the Messiah.

He obeyed, suffered, and died. He atoned for sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness; and he now has the Spirit at his disposal. Now, behold, in the consequences, a most striking contrast:—Man in a state of nature, and man in a state of grace.

All comparisons fail,—and Scripture furnishes us with many striking ones too—“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” Contrast the polar regions of cold and darkness, with the heat, light, and fertility of southern climes. All these will give us very faint ideas of the blessings with which believers are visited, when God adopts them as sons and daughters, makes them plants of his own right-hand planting, and fructifies and fertilizes them by the dew of his Spirit. He promises to water his spiritual garden every moment; and lest any hurt it, he will keep it night and day.

The history of man is very concise. “To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.” The extreme of igno-

rance and the extreme of danger. Ruin impending over him like a tottering edifice, or a falling cliff, ready to crush him to destruction, and, at the same time, accompanied by the most astonishing insensibility; for it is said, "To them that sit in darkness." And we read of the world lying in wickedness. Men sit and lie down when they are, in their own estimation, in a state of security. How truly awful! And this was the state of the world when visited by Jesus; this was your state and mine. Sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. The shadow always implies the contiguity of the substance. What is implied in the shadow of death? The proximity of eternal death.

Learn, then, a few lessons from this important subject.

We see the absolute necessity of being visited by the Sun of Righteousness; I mean individually. The blessings of redemption must flow from the bosom of Messiah into each of our bosoms. Causes and effects are inseparably united in the natural world. No man expects to reap without sowing. Means and ends are, if possible, more intimately connected in the spiritual world than in the natural. God may, if he please, work a miracle, and fertilize a desert; but it is inconsistent with his divine perfections to visit any soul with spiritual blessings but in

and through the Redeemer. Nothing but death is found any where except in the bosom of our covenant head.

The last lesson is gratitude: and probably the highest which we shall learn in heaven. There is something very lovely in this grace; and it is attended with feelings eminently calculated to make happy. To be grateful to a faithful friend, whose unwearied services have been extended in the midst of trials and difficulties,—a sense of such love is a cordial to the human heart; but all must be left behind when Calvary opens upon our view. Are we seeking an enlarged, appropriate view of that glorious sacrifice, that our hearts may be inflamed, and our feet quickened in the heavenly path? Are we kissing the Son, lest he be angry? O unite with me at the throne of grace, that this blessing may be ours, and then our united praises shall eventually ascend before the throne of God in glory!

SERMON X.

THE WEAKNESS OF MAN.

JOHN xv. 5.

“ *Without me ye can do nothing.*”

THE imagination of man may sport with truth while his heart is barred against the reception of the divine visitor. Generally speaking, we have much more truth in speculation and theory than in genuine practice. True religion involves this in it; that the weight of Deity himself is suspended to his own truth to sink it down into the heart. Nothing short of the mighty power of God can effect this. The truth that we so easily assent to with our lips, when pressed home upon us, fails not (unless disciplined by divine grace) to elicit the corruption of our hearts. Who would not assent to the proposition, that we are dependent on God for every

thing ; yet let this simple truth be presented, with all that it necessarily involves, to the human heart, and it is hated and scorned. Lend me your ears this morning, I conjure you ; and before I come to the conclusion of this discourse, your principles and mine will be put to the test ; whether we are disposed to welcome this truth into our bosoms, that we are dependent upon Christ for every thing ; if so, we shall certainly be conscious that we are Israelites indeed, in whom there is no cherished guile.

Our dependence on him is taught us in a very striking manner. We are his offspring. As our Creator, we are his children ; as believers, we are the offspring of all his woes. Our utter and entire dependence on him is fully taught us in the short text : “ Without me ye can do nothing.” “ I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman : every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” That is, every professional, every nominal branch. Again—“ Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.” This conveys the same idea in nearly similar terms. And every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” The word of Christ, the Spirit of Christ, and the blood of Christ, remove the pollution of

the sinner, and justify him for ever. But justification is necessarily connected with faith. God justifies us not only as a Sovereign, but as a supreme Governor. Though our own obedience does not in the least constitute the material of justification, yet our justification necessarily involves our obedience. This is an easy distinction, and should ever be kept in mind. The sovereign purpose of God does not in the least degree militate against his authority. Angels in heaven know perfectly well the will of the Almighty to preserve them in a state of blissful innocence for ever ; but this does not set aside the command of God to love and obey him with all their hearts ; on the contrary, it is in obedience to God that every finite being loves him, and it is an absolute impossibility that the creature should receive, or God communicate, that knowledge to him in any other manner. The knowledge of our interest in God cannot be learned exclusively with the head, the heart must be engaged likewise. “ As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” Our work is to abide in him, and this is the object perpetually to be kept in view : “ I am the vine, ye are the branches ;” in other words, in communion with Christ the Lord, we bring forth much fruit. Do not despise the

fruit that is borne here below, for it is very precious: I am firmly persuaded in my own mind, that the obedience of faith is far more glorious than the obedience of angels above, notwithstanding the alloy and imperfection with which it is mixed; (for, like the apostle of old, when we would do good evil is present with us.) The Saviour then adds—"For without me ye can do nothing," literally nothing; I cannot address you without him; I cannot move my hand without him.

The first observation I would make on the passage before us is,

I. That Jesus Christ is our Creator and Preserver, and that we are indebted to him, not only for all the faculties of the body and soul, but likewise for the ceaseless exercise of them;—indebted to him who was once a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; to him who was crucified between two thieves. "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. This is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The light of reason, and the exercise of reason,—every thing emanates from him, and every thing is dependent upon him. This must readily be allowed, and, indeed, the natural man will assent to it, and be very little

disturbed, provided he be suffered to flow on in his own strong current of iniquity to the ocean of eternal misery.

I remark,

II. That irrespective of the grace of God we invariably abuse our natural faculties. Sin may justly be defined the abuse of the creatures of God; the abuse of ourselves, and of all other things which God has been pleased to bestow upon us. Have you courage to follow me into the inmost recesses of your own bosoms? I am determined to enter them in the name of the living God and to throw open the gates of hell in your hearts individually. Can you bear the discipline? May God of his infinite goodness enable the worm who addresses you first to bear it in his own bosom, and then he will be able not only to teach you what truth is, but in the most feeling, tender, and sympathetic manner.

Sin then involves the abuse of the creature, and the abuse of the creature makes God himself the minister of sin. This startling fact is the most powerful argument that could be adduced to prove to us the exceeding sinfulness of sin. In every evil act we have ever committed, we have made God himself the minister of sin. The hand that now waves in your presence has made God the minister of sin; the eyes that

now behold you have made him subservient to sin; the tongue that now addresses you has made him the minister of iniquity. Is sin then a little thing?—is it a light thing? Alas! it is in the eyes of fools who make a mock of it, but it cannot be so eternally. It is a debt of justice first to Deity, and then to the transgressor, that it should be known in all its awful dimensions, and receive a just recompense.

Do not suppose that the strong light in which I have just placed sin is merely a flash from my own imagination—the creature of fancy, unsupported by Scripture testimony. No; the fact, however startling it may be to the mind, is fully established in the following passage, and may it have its due effect upon all your minds. “Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings, neither hast thou honoured me with sacrifices: I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices, but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities.” The full developement of this awful truth would kindle the flames of hell in the bosom of every individual present, irrespective of the full and triumphant view of the Saviour’s glory as a mediator between God and

man. This truth not only shows us the evil, but the desert of sin ; it proves the absolute necessity of an avenging Deity ; and not only so, but of one who is God as well as man, to atone. Has Deity been made subservient to such insult ? Who then can atone for it but Deity ?

Again—Has God been made the minister of lust for ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years, and shall man escape with impunity ? Absolute impossibility. This is one of the wildest ideas that ever revelled in the human imagination. We hear much said of the mercy of God, and the inference that is blasphemously drawn from it, that God will not eternally punish his enemies ; but every argument adduced against the eternity of hell torments, if pushed to its extremity proves that God would be unjust to punish at all. The king of England is too merciful a great deal, to punish any crime. The clemency of his disposition is such, that he suffers thieves and murderers to do just what they please. No cognizance whatever is taken of crime ; there are no criminal courts of justice ; no execution of the law when violated. Only suppose such a state of things in Britain, and she would be the most infamous country under the sun. It is one of the glories of good government that punishment invariably follows and visits the guilty. Only rob human government of this,

and it immediately becomes infamous. Now, apply this to divine government. The King of kings is too merciful to punish his enemies; he is infinitely cruel as well as merciful, for he has put his own Son to death, that his enemies may revel with impunity for ever and ever. O do not be imposed on; study these truths: and where are you to learn them? In being well acquainted with your own hearts. Sin is a perpetual attack on Deity; and if any of us enter into eternity unprepared, unjustified, unchanged, by the grace of God, the consequences will be awful in the extreme: God will meet us then in every faculty of the soul and body, and will require vengeance in them all. And why? Because we have made him subservient to our sins. We must be separated from the first Adam, and united to Christ the living vine. An atonement is necessary, and that atonement necessarily involves in it all the glories of Deity in the sufferings of humanity.

But more than this is also necessary. There must be a counteracting, a subduing principle, emanating from the essential life of Deity, from the essential life of sin-atonement Deity. This is indispensably requisite, or we may form ten thousand resolutions, yet in the moment of temptation we shall snap them all; and neither the sincerity nor fervency of our penitence will contain any

security against the commission of future sin. Nothing less will preserve us than the power of an omnipotent God—that God who annihilated our hell in our own nature on Calvary. We see the wisdom, propriety, and tenderness that prompted the Saviour of mankind to dwell immediately on truths of the most vital importance, in his interview with Nicodemus. He does not waste a single moment on a preface, but immediately insists upon the necessity of an atonement, the influences of the Holy Spirit, and a new birth unto righteousness. We see, then, that the obedience of every moral agent is involved in the agency of Deity, pervading all the faculties of his soul and body. No obedience was ever found without it, for “without me ye can do nothing.” What must the converse of the proposition be? With him ye can do all things. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” In the merits and atonement of Jesus, all the perfections of God visit man in all their glory and all their love, his holiness and justice are as much the friends of the believer as his mercy. Are we willing then to be altogether delightfully dependent on the Saviour for every thing? If so, we have been made willing by the mighty power of God, and I appeal to you who know yourselves, not made so, without a vast deal of opposition from within.

All obedience, wherever found, whether in heaven or earth, ceaselessly flows from the life and energy of Deity. Then, and not till then, does it gratefully and delightfully return to its source, as rivers run into the sea, whence their streams were originally supplied. Do we relish these doctrines? Do we feel the absolute necessity of being conversant with them, not only in theory, but in principle and practice? Verily then, we are at the gate of heaven; we have seen God in our nature—God in his mediatorial glory, with the eye of faith; and the vision of faith shall soon be exchanged for that which is far more glorious.

“Without me ye can do nothing.” The power of God travels from himself into the bosoms of the angelic hosts each moment of time, and thus must it travel with ourselves in all the glory of his atonement: this alone can make us active in the service of God: and whenever you find yourselves indisposed to serve and love God, lift up your heart to him for strength. Be on your guard against Satan, for he will ever endeavour to interpose. Remember the believer’s motto—“In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” In this consists the difference between the old and young believer. The advanced Christian knows himself better; he knows his enemies better;

he knows how to silence them better; and in the midst of all difficulties he lifts up his eyes to the author and finisher of faith, and triumphs over all his foes. We all have, more or less, sufferings and trials to endure; it is well to know that God dispenses them in mercy. Listen to me while I present you with an interesting truth. Jesus poises all your sufferings in his own, lest the weight of a feather should be imposed more than is necessary; and, more than this; he carries us in his bosom, he bears us as the vine bears the branches, and in all our afflictions he is afflicted. Study then this delightful, interesting subject, and it will be one of the most glorious proofs of spiritual integrity before God, when you receive all things at his hands for the sake of Christ, when you live dependent upon him every moment; when you place pride beneath your feet, and trample it in the dust.

All things are provided for you; why then should corroding care gnaw your spirit, and bow you down to the earth? Some one may answer, O but my distress is great, my trials are beyond description. They are not beyond the sympathy and power of Jesus. May they draw you to him. Every thing that draws us to the throne of God, and obliges us to leave home, and seek and find our all in him, is an inestimable bless-

ing. I am grateful to God for having been made, in many instances, to feel my own weakness.

Lastly : It is in communion with Jesus Christ that you are to triumph over every enemy, internal as well as external ; and this is bearing fruit to God, internal fruit, the fruit of the heart. You must meet and overcome all enemies exclusively in the Lord Jesus. It matters not whether many or few, the Lord knows no difference. Unite with me in saying, In the Lord have I strength : every thing I want is in Jesus, every thing temporal as well as spiritual ; I have only to apply to him, and I am determined, even while here on earth, to enter into a little heaven below, because I am one with Jesus, and all that he has to bestow will flow into my bosom with all the energy of his own life.

SERMON XI.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

LUKE xvi. 9.

“Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”

THIS is our Saviour's application of the parable of the unjust steward, who, when he apprehended that his dishonesty would be discovered, persevered in adding theft to theft. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely. “For the children of this world,” our Lord adds, “are in their generation wiser than the children of light.”

We may admire an individual's ingenuity, while we reprobate the principle by which he is influenced. The children of this world are often wiser than the children of light in connecting means and ends together: their patience is greater

in keeping their end in view ; their perseverance and industry are superior : but, in another point of view, they are infinitely more foolish. Their means are bad, and the end is disgraceful ; involving insult to the Deity, and eternal ruin to their immortal spirits. Money is called the mammon of unrighteousness, because it is frequently gotten by unrighteousness, and squandered by unrighteous means ; and it proves a strong temptation to many to be unrighteous in their principles and actions.

But God would have us contract a lawful disposition for riches ; it is not lawful to hate them. We should love what God gives us ; and the proof that we do so, will be in devoting them to the end for which they were given to us ; that when ye fail, they may receive you, or you may be received into everlasting habitations.

A life of obedience here below leads to a life of obedience above. He who obeys God here, will obey him above for ever. He only enters into other possessions of infinitely greater value when he leaves his possessions here : but while here, he makes friends of those which were given for a wise and holy purpose. Cultivate their friendship. And how is this to be done ? By using them to the glory of God.

The first observation arising from this, is, that

man, in becoming the enemy of God, becomes the enemy of universal being.

All the eloquence of heaven and hell is far from being adequate to the task of depicting man in the deformity of his sin, guilt, and misery. We could not bear to see sin in its full dimensions. It has never been so presented to any one but the Saviour of mankind. He had a full view of its sinfulness, and a full sense of its danger, when he suffered to deliver us from the wrath to come, and to redeem us from all iniquity. We read of an Alexander, a Cæsar, and others, who subjected half the world, who destroyed, or attempted to destroy, half mankind, that they might rule the other half with a rod of iron. There is more than this in *our* history. We have proclaimed eternal war against the King of kings, and against universal being.

As sin is so dreadful in itself, so its consequences are terrible in the extreme. It aims at the destruction of Jehovah, and of every other being. If man were left to himself, universal being would be his enemy for ever. Ye sons and daughters of folly, if ye die the victims of sin, you will not have a friend in the universe. All beings will be your enemies:—God and his Christ; his saints and angels; all in heaven and all in hell; and to crown the whole, yourself your own enemy for ever. Oh! flee from the

wrath to come ! This truth explains the miseries we see around us. In consequence of man being the enemy of God, we find universal being armed against him ; and the Lord of Hosts at their head, leading them to the field of battle to avenge his cause.

Read the history of Egypt. Lice and locusts at his command, executing his will : his creatures avenge the cause of their insulted Creator. When God commands, the sea divides, expands, and receives the sinner ; the earth opens and devours him. The sun pours destruction on the head of guilty man ; the atmosphere is inspired with poison, and carries destruction to the bosom of millions. Terrible as this is, it has been justly observed, that there is a great deal of tenderness in the bitterest visitations of God on this side eternity. Mercy is blended with judgment. The Lord uses instruments, wherewith to visit man, who cannot bear his naked hand. But the time is coming when he will dismiss all instruments, and laying hold of the sinner with his own hands, fight against him himself, without the intervention of any second causes. Many who were yesterday on this earth, to-morrow will be in hell. Thoughtless sinner, will you attend to this ?

The truth of God was intended to inhabit the human feelings as well as the human intellect.

There are some who endeavour to unite the practice of vice and the profession of religion. If there are any here living in sin, under the cloak of religion, I conjure you to have mercy on yourselves! Such a one is more eminently the servant of Satan and the child of hell than any other.

II. Secondly. There can be no friendship with the creature unless there be friendship with the Creator. There is not wealth enough in finite being to be at peace with each other, except at peace with God. Those who are at peace with each other, must first have been at peace with God. The history of human redemption proves this. Adam lost all by his sin; all creatures became his enemies. Yet it is said, "The earth hath he given to the children of men." It has been purchased by the Saviour; and in him every thing that is necessary, of the things of time and sense, is given to the family of heaven. The Saviour died to purchase peace for us; therefore he is said to be "our peace." The attributes of Deity are reconciled to the salvation of man only in Jesus Christ.

The creatures of God are conferred in a peculiar manner on his family, as covenant blessings, and to be devoted to his glory. If we realize the peace of God in our conscience, and

the love of God in our hearts, then, and then only, do we know how to dispose of the creatures as we ought. This is exemplified in providence. The creatures become wonderful blessings to the children of God. Some of them are instruments of destruction when God commands: but some are instruments of deliverance, made the respectful servants of the sons and daughters of the King of kings. All flock round the family of heaven at his command, and pour forth not only their innocence, but their sweetest treasures. Would you have the universe and every thing it contains moving around you, every thing in some respect your servant? Fear the Lord. Look at the sun, moon, and stars, all servants of the family of heaven. The sun stood still on Mount Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." How they fought we need not now consider; it is enough to know that they are at peace with all the family of heaven, fighting their battles. The flames of the fiery furnace consumed only the bonds of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Lions became lambs in the presence of Daniel, a child of God; and though famishing with hunger, durst not touch one of the royal family of heaven. The use which the believer makes of these things, is this: he says, "I fear nothing; I fear the God of Israel, and he can

extract some good from every evil, even from the malice of devils." Fear God and laugh at the universe. Fear God and enjoy the friendship and the service of universal being. I may ascend from the inanimate and brute creation to the angels of light. And how do they delight in serving you? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation? And they find a rich reward for their services, for you are dearer to them than to each other. This subject may afford an explanation of the text, "The meek shall inherit the earth." The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. It is, in a peculiar manner, the possession of our head and representative, Jesus Christ; and the apostle says, "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

III. The third observation has been anticipated. The Creator's friendship necessarily includes that of the creature. All the creatures will travel in the footsteps of God; every thing will be a blessing. God delights to do us good in every possible way. Every good that any being can afford will flow into our bosoms for ever. Where is wisdom, then? Is it not in the service of God? Where is folly? In fighting against the living God.

In reconciliation to God, look for every bless-

ing. When he tells us that he delights in mercy, he tells us, in other words, that he will visit us with every good. What must be the high destiny of those who are to receive from God all the good they are capable of receiving at his hands! May God give us more of the influence of his Holy Spirit, that we may live in the daily habit of entering into these glorious realities! How delightful is it, under the influence of these truths, to walk abroad, and see every thing proclaiming to us the salvation of God; telling us that though every thing was forfeited by the transgression of the first Adam, although there was a period when universal being was armed against us, it has laid aside its arms, and become our firm and invincible friend in the friendship of the living God! &c.

SERMON XII.

THE SURRENDER OF THE HEART.

PROVERBS xxiii. 26.

“ My son, give me thine heart.”

“ THE Father of the righteous shall rejoice, and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.” Hear this, young men and young women; and remember that the duties you owe to your parents are all involved in the duties you owe to the Almighty. Let me entreat you to cherish correct views of the relationship subsisting between your parents and yourselves, for it is typical of that which exists between God and you. All that you owe to them is due primarily and perpetually to God.

“ Honour thy father and thy mother.” And the only proof that you honour them as you should is this—a studious care not to do any

thing that will hurt or distress them in the least degree. Love is invariably tender and delicate : it spares, to the utmost of its power, the object of its affection, and would sooner expose its own bosom to a shaft, than that one should reach the object of its love. And you, parents, take the same view of this relationship ; and remember that all you owe to your children is primarily due to God. Remember that your government must be like his, or you will be unjust to your children. Wisdom, rectitude, and love, must be the ingredients in it, and then you will avoid the perilous extremes of wicked, false, and mischievous indulgence, and cruel, harsh, and bitter austerity. We hear many complaints of the disobedience of children, and sometimes of the shameful misconduct of the children of professors. In many cases, (I am far from saying all, for the human heart is wicked enough to bound over the loftiest barriers that privilege can cast around it,) the fault is not on one side only : parents are involved as well as children in the mournful results. Hear me, parents ! hear me, children ! while I call your attention to the fate of the disobedient child, under the Mosaic dispensation. The delinquent was to be stoned to death, and the parents were to cast the first stone. Now, suppose at that very moment, not only the child conscious of disobedience to his parents,

but the parents, at the same time, conscious of neglect and misconduct in his education : then, I ask, what finite mind can do justice to the agony which must have pervaded the bosom of both parent and child, in such an hour of trial ?

“ My Son, give me thine heart.”

Here we see a wise Father addressing a child in wisdom and tenderness. If we consider these as the words of Solomon, they are very instructive, and Solomon was a truly religious man. In the Book of Ecclesiastes you find a striking proof of his penitence. When God is pleased to bring home again the backslider to himself, and teaches him to instruct others, his lessons are admirably worthy of attention. They come from deep and bitter experience, and from the depths of repentance. We find this idea in the fervour of David’s devotion in the fifty-first psalm ; after invoking the mercy of God, he says, “ Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.”

Do not despise Solomon, for God has loved and forgiven him. He who is forgiven of God stands in no need of blows from us, his heavenly Father has inflicted upon him as many stripes as were necessary. Solomon was an eminently pious man, he led the nation of Israel for years in the worship of God. The use we should make of his fall is, to distrust ourselves. It is recorded

for our benefit, that we may shun the rock on which he split.

“ I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son, and my mercy shall not depart from him.”

Behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The Lord himself addresses the sons and daughters of men.

Let us consider,

I. The relationship—my Son. We find involved in this relationship all that can subsist between the Creator and the creature, in the highest and most eminent degree. He is the cause of all causes, and of all effects, that are good, to the exclusion of all imperfection and sin. No imperfection is to be traced to the Almighty. He knows how to make a wise use of imperfection; but good, and good only, can emanate from him.

The relationship presents itself again in the dependence of all beings upon him, not for one thing only, but for every thing, in all places, under all circumstances. Yes, in the midst of the greatest affliction, and when exposed to the severest calamities.

There is this interesting truth in the creation of his people—they are created to be redeemed.

Consider him, then, as the parent of his children in reference to the redemption that is by

Jesus Christ. The incarnation of the Son of God is such a stupendous truth, that it never could have been believed by any individual but on the clearest testimony. The reason why it is so frequently disbelieved, insulted, and rejected, is that men know not their own hearts, and they listen to their own deceitful thoughts. The voice of unbelief tells them that it is impossible. But, my dear hearers, no truth in Scripture can be properly understood, but in the light of Messiah. As in the absence of the material sun, we find it impossible to judge of and distinguish colours, and are in consequence frequently deceived : so without the rays of the Sun of Righteousness we shall be mistaken in every thing : and when man descends into the dark pit of the human bosom, with his own rushlight only in his hand, is it a matter of surprise that he should be misled ? Instead of spurning the remedy which is provided in the light of Jesus, they would fall down in the dust before him, their Saviour, their God, their all, for ever and ever.

In his incarnation he has connected himself with man in every possible way, and this should encourage trembling sinners to cast themselves upon him. His holiness could not be so fully developed were not this the case. Read the history of his ancestors, and you will find the conduct of some of them most infamous ; they com-

prise not only Jew, but Gentile also; and what does this teach, but that he delights in saving sinners? This is diametrically opposed to what man does: we all desire respectable connexions, as free from stain as possible; and it is our wisdom so to do, for we cannot cleanse or deliver them; but Jesus could.

The life which he spent here below involves in every thing he did a blessing for man. Go to the garden of Gethsemane, and then follow him to the cross where he suffered torments ineffable; torments which will never be known; torments of which fallen spirits can have no idea, for they have not the purity of his nature to enter into them: and it was the perfect purity of his humanity that enabled him to enter into them. The rebellion of lost spirits under the wrath of God aggravates their torments. It was purity that aggravated the suffering of the Saviour.

When Messiah called all worlds into existence, he spake and they flew from his lips; not so when man was to be created anew—God must become his parent, in the sufferings of a God through the pains of hell. He died to give birth to his child: his hell was the origin of our heaven; his misery the source of our bliss; his condemnation the fountain of our justification: that we might participate in his triumphs for ever and ever.

Thus we see how this relationship involves in it every blessing, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. As the son is heir to his father's estate, so is the believer heir to all that God has to bestow. "The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

I come now to consider the obligations which this relationship involves.

The right of legislating, in God, arises from the relationship subsisting between him and ourselves; and it is the command that makes obedience binding on our part. Without his command we should never have known the path of obedience. And here I would observe, that as the relationship involves in it all the blessings that God has to bestow, so likewise it includes all the obedience he can claim. The relationship cannot live without the blessing; nor can it exist without the obedience. Our obedience is as much due to God as if it could justify us. We are justified that we may be obedient; and if it were possible for God to justify us without sanctification—I shudder at the consequences.

Obedience involves in it three things, inseparably connected.

1. Supreme love.
2. Implicit confidence.
3. Unreserved obedience.

First, supreme love.—Let it be remembered, that God cannot accept of the second place in the affections of any being; it is an impossibility. If God has not the first place in the affections, he has no place at all. If he does not reign in our heart, we trample him under our feet.

Only mark attentively what the Saviour says to his disciples; “He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.” Now I challenge all Socinians to answer this question: What mere mortal man could or would dare to utter such language as this to a fellow-man?

The second thing involved in obedience, is implicit confidence at all times and in all places. God is a being who knows no difficulties. If it were possible for the universe to be set in array against him; heaven, earth, and hell, would be like a moth. What, then, is the inference to be deduced? His child shall know no difficulty. Is this the language of Scripture? Is this the language of humility? There can be no humility without it. It is pride that rejects it. “I can do all things through Christ, that strengtheneth me:” and we find this satisfactorily realized in the conduct of the saints of old. Read the history of Jonah, after his transgression had been the means of bringing him, according to his own account, into the belly of hell; he believed that

God was able to save to the uttermost ; he trusted and was delivered. Again, when Daniel was condemned to the den of lions, did he fear ? He does not seem to have been alarmed in the least degree, but opened his windows as usual, looking towards the temple, the type of his Saviour, and prayed three times a day. He had embosomed himself in a covenant God ; and was he disappointed ? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, under the influence of the same Spirit, set the flames at defiance ; and when the king looked, behold Jesus was with them, the friend of sinners, and if so, surely the friend of saints. Now love and confidence are inseparably connected together : they are weak or strong alike. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm ; but blessed are all they that put their trust in thee."

The third thing involved is unreserved obedience in life and spirit. Are there any of you, I would most affectionately ask, setting up an idol in your hearts ? If so, your Father's frown is upon you, and that idol is eating away all your comfort and consolation ; perseverance in what we know to be wrong has the most pernicious effect on the human heart. Every indulged sin hardens the heart, prepares it for new transgression, and removes it further from God. Unreserved obedience implies a holy op-

position to all sin, in private as well as in public; and the effects of this are soon apparent. (We sometimes see professors with a degree of levity in their demeanour that borders on folly, and which proves, that they hold little or no communion with God in secret. I do not connect levity with cheerfulness. The Christian ought to be cheerful; and I would go still further: no one has a right to be cheerful but the child of God. An angel's smile becomes his countenance, and the blush of hell that of all others.) Hear what the apostle says: "Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man;" and dwelling on the fruits and effects of that faith which worketh by love, he says, "Whatsoever things are true, 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."

Attempts have been made to separate doctrine, experience, and practice, from each other; but it is an absolute impossibility; they must all live or perish together.

In conclusion, I invite the attention of my hearers to a few points which cannot but offer themselves to our consideration from this subject.

God is the only being who is not obliged to bestow his affections upon another. The reverse of this must be affirmed of all besides. This is one of the striking contrasts between God and his creatures. He is happy, infinitely happy, in his own perfections; and would have remained so throughout eternity, had he never called into existence any being. Not so with finite beings; they must have an object for their love foreign from themselves.

And now let me entreat you to enter into the recesses of your own hearts, and discover the object that is possessed of your affections. If God does not possess the heart, it is assuredly given to some other object: it will be given to sin and the devil, and they will keep it to all eternity. Do not tell me that you cannot give your heart to God—you can give it to covetousness, you can give it to drunkenness, you can give it to your lusts, you can give it to the world. O how awfully men deceive themselves! and even forget that the only obstacle that prevents their giving their heart to God, is the wilfully giving it to some other object, and that object infinitely unworthy of it.

The human heart is in universal request. Ask the lover what he wants—the heart of his mistress. Ask the young, commencing the career of business, what he seeks—an interest in the af-

fection of his friends. Heaven and hell are rivals for the human heart at the present moment. Is it wisdom to demur?

Remember what has been bestowed upon us. The heart of Deity and the heart of humanity: when we do justice to this truth, and remember what the Saviour has done for us, can we keep our hearts from him?

“By the mystery of his holy incarnation, by his holy nativity and circumcision by his baptism, fasting, and temptation, by his agony and bloody sweat, by his cross and passion, by his precious death and burial, and by his glorious resurrection and ascension,” I conjure you to give your hearts to him who has done so much for you. He only can fill it—he only is worthy to possess it.

SERMON XIII.

THE SPIRITUAL HOUSE.

1 PETER, ii. 4, 5.

“ To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

BELIEVERS are here represented as coming to Christ. If asked, what is coming to Christ, I reply, it is coming *from* the *commission* of sin, *with* the guilt and unworthiness of it. In coming to him we shun sin in one respect; in another we bring it with us. This the apostle dwells on, and illustrates in a striking manner: he introduces a rich and instructive metaphor, “laying aside all malice and all guile, &c. as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that

ye may grow thereby.” He begins with the heart; all malice and all guile—all evil speaking, here are the effects. The tongue is said to be a very unruly member; it is to be cured only at the root, and that root is the human heart. It is only by faith in the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of Jesus Christ, imparted by the energy of the Holy Spirit, that the tongue will be cured, and bring forth treasures, new and old, from the changed and renewed heart. We are all prone to evil speaking; it either is or was the besetting sin of each one before me; our tongues have often been furnished with fleeter wings, and barbed with more malignant destruction than the lightning itself. “As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.” How instructive! The child desires nothing in a state of infancy but that pure nutrition which God in his goodness has provided. It desires nothing else; only give to it that which its heavenly Father has provided, and it is happy. Do we ardently desire the sincere milk of the word? This is the proof that we enjoy spiritual health, and without this all else is vain. It is given to us that we may grow thereby; that we may be perfect as God is perfect, and holy as he is holy. This is the only proof that we can receive ourselves, and present to others, that we have known a covenant God; for he adds, “if

so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.” There are some things in nature so sweet, so grateful to the palate, that we are ever anxious to repeat the enjoyment of them. He who has once tasted that the Lord is gracious, has received from God himself that which he must ever desire and prize—that which must have a direct and effectual tendency to give him a distaste for every thing else. Mercy is not only the richest but the sweetest blessing God has bestowed on the creature.

The first thing in the text that naturally solicits our attention is, a foundation. The apostle speaks of an edifice, and we know that in building, the foundation is the first consideration; the best foundation is always sought by every wise architect. If it be necessary to erect an edifice on any particular spot, if there be no natural foundation, an artificial one must be made, otherwise it will involve the architect in disgrace and ruin. God has, from eternity, determined to erect an edifice in the world exceeding in glory all the works of his hands; but there was no foundation here on which to build—and why not? There is an alarming deficiency—an awful void. Every being who once forsakes God, forsakes him for ever: the individual who once transgresses against God, is determined to transgress for ever. It is said that serpents grow

while they live; and the old serpent sin will grow in malignity through the countless ages of eternity. The description of man in Scripture as a transgressor, is very awful, and he is wholly averse from studying his own disposition and character. Man forsakes God. Behold him descending at once into the abyss of eternity, involving himself perpetually in new transgressions, and consequently in new misery. The disposition and fate of man must have corresponded for ever with those of fallen spirits, had not God interposed. But to return to the metaphor, what is the nature of the interposition? Direct your attention to Scripture, and see the rock of ages rolled down from heaven to earth, filling up the dread abyss created by sin, and forming the foundation of all our hopes. The rock of Israel became the foundation of the church of God. The Old Testament involves the promise, and the New Testament echoes it. Behold then, in the first place, Deity becoming the foundation of his church. It would have been an infinite and eternal impossibility, without this rock, this foundation, to have raised a church in which God himself was to dwell and reign for ever.

The second remark I make is this:—It is a living foundation. The apostle seems to treat Jewish prejudices with great skill and delicacy. The Jews boasted of their temple. The second

temple, as well as the first, was erected on a very firm foundation, but a very barren one ; as the name Sion implies, (signifying drought,) probably to remind them of their own natural drought and barrenness. A stone is the last thing to be inhabited by life—every language seems to furnish us with proof that life, and all its attributes, are at the remotest distance from stone. But here is a living stone ; and who can he be but one who is possessed of essential life ? Life in God is different from life in any other being. Life, properly speaking, inhabits no one but Deity. Jesus says of himself, “ I am the way, the truth, and *the life.*” Had he been a finite being, he could not have used such language, for it cannot be said of any finite being that he is life. Of the highest intelligences it can only be said that they live. Life in God is essence. They are only the offspring of essence.

In the second place, every other life is dependent on the will of God, not only in creation but in preservation. The question has been asked again and again, Is the soul of man immortal ; and why ? The answer is easy. Because God wills its immortality, and because in that will he has provided the means of preserving its immortality. But no one essentially possesses immortality but God. In the nature of things we must consider him as existing previous to the

exercise of any will ; while at the same time he is clearly influenced in his volition by all his divine perfections. We should do well to consider this—that the will of God is influenced by his own infinite perfections. This is the utmost that can be said of its freedom. I dwell on this, because some say that the will of God is capricious ; irrespective of right and wrong. To confute such a sentiment, I would only ask, do we, or can we admire the mind that moves irrespectively of truth and wisdom ? The apostle directs the attention of the believing Hebrews to essential life united with humanity. As man was the transgressor, justice demanded a human sacrifice ; humanity was infinitely too poor to present that sacrifice, for the justice of God being infinite, required an infinite sacrifice. All this is true. The state of man required an union of deity and humanity. But there is another thing to be considered. Death could perish only in essential life. Death could not perish in finite being, for finite being is the parent of death. Death can only be annihilated in essential life—“ Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.” See the bosom of Deity filled and expanded to welcome death, in his humanity, into that bosom. Death, in visiting the humanity of the Son of God, came into full contact with the perfections of Deity, and perished eternally.

This is the believer's triumph. It is said of Christ that he hath abolished death. It is much to say he called all things into existence by the breath of his mouth; but here we behold infinitely more. The foundation which the apostle presents to the believing Hebrews is a triumphant Saviour. Jesus, in all his mediatorial glory, abolishing death: the destruction of the destroyer. "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction." May the Holy Spirit endear this foundation to us more and more, and in a very short time, stone raised upon stone, the edifice shall ascend above the sky; when God himself will enter the building, in all his glory, and reside and reign in it for ever, in the sublimest communion with his believing people.

3rdly. It is a living temple. There is instruction in every syllable that proceeds from the pen of the apostle. "Ye also as lively stones;" and very justly so. Sin has petrified humanity, so that it has become, in consequence of transgression, a rock of adamant. The Spirit of Jesus can alone separate us from our native rock; and he directs the attention of his church to the quarry whence she was cut. God, by the mouth of his prophet, thus addresses her—"Look to the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit, whence ye were digged." By whom was this done? By the life of him in whom perished the

penal death that was due to us. Who could separate us from our native rock? No one but Jesus. He brought life and immortality to light. It would have been an infinite inconsistency to have communicated life without that atonement, for it would have communicated death to his own perfections. In this living rock the life of the foundation ascends and pervades every stone: this is the reason why they adhere to each other. This presents us with an instructive truth: that, in an inferior sense, we are dependent on each other; thus inculcating a lesson of brotherly love. Here then is the edifice rising; God is the architect—God is the life; pervading not only the foundation, but every stone in the building. His truth and his ministers are the means made use of in erecting it; and he will ere long present it to the wondering gaze of universal being, as the grand master-piece of infinite wisdom and love. Are we part of this noble building? If so, oh could we but form an idea of the honour conferred upon us by God in uniting us to such a foundation, all our little joys and sorrows, in travelling through time to eternity, would be absorbed in the overpowering thought.

Lastly, God is presented with a lively worship. I call it so, because it is spiritual worship. It involves the life of Deity. We should bear in mind, as a most important maxim in divinity,

that we must know where our strength lies every moment. Worship, wherever found, is the offspring of the divine energy. I tremble to think what volumes of blasphemy must be comprized in the worship of those who banish from it the divinity of Jesus, and the influences of the Holy Spirit. Would you worship God in spirit and in truth? Would you present him with what he delights to receive at your hands? It must be eternally done in and by the energy of God the Holy Ghost.

There are glorious peculiarities in the worship of the believer. Christ is a priest above; his people are priests below. He is the High Priest before the throne. He has been their Priest here: consecrated by his own blood, and anointed by his own Spirit: they are consecrated by the same blood, anointed by the same Spirit. And what is the proof? They are engaged here below in the same work in which he is engaged above. This is spiritual worship, and nothing short of it can be received by God. Am I presenting myself daily to God in Christ Jesus? then I am a spiritual worshipper. Do I prize his righteousness above every thing else? Do I see the necessary connexion between the image of God and his righteousness? "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." True religion attacks sin in every way—it is a

preventive, a preservative, an antidote. The apostle, with a meek simplicity, intimates all this in the passage just quoted. "Little children, sin not; and if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" who could pen such rich truth in so few words?

What more is involved in the worship of God, when we enter into it as our own element? The sacrifices of God are a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and it is impossible to enter into the spirit of these truths without a broken and contrite heart: it has many imperfections; but the believer says, Take it, blessed Lord, just as it is, and make it thy temple for ever.

Suppose an individual informed you that it was his intention to erect an edifice the most splendid that the sun had ever beheld in the midst of the Atlantic ocean; would you not account him a madman? But if you beheld the same individual tearing up rocks and mountains by the roots and hurling them into the deep, and eventually saw the foundation raising its head in triumph above the waves; after such mighty obstacles had been overcome, you might then reasonably look forward to the accomplishment of the plan. My brethren, the mighty difficulty is removed; the foundation is laid in Sion, and the building must raise its head in eternal triumph. God has pledged himself to

the completion of this his eternal purpose. All his perfections are engaged to bring the stones together—the edifice must be finished. And what use am I to make of this? That there is an infinite welcome to God; he receives the stones individually into his own hand, with more delight than he welcomes the services of angels. Do not be intimidated because you feel your imperfections; the intercession of Jesus implies imperfection; and when imperfection ceases, then the intercession of Jesus must cease. It is impossible to hold communion with God in Christ, without being conscious of sin and imperfection: but though a sinner, in the merit and energy of God, the believer is enabled to oppose every enemy within and without that presents itself against him, against God and his Christ.

Thoughtless sinner, if there be any such before me, consider the expense of Deity in laying this foundation; and shall the corner-stone be despised with impunity? Consider the peril that attends its rejection: every sin must be visited with punishment equal to its desert; but this ascends above every other: the choice is—a throne in heaven or the lowest bed in hell.

Happy is he who knows what it is to prize the Saviour, and cling to him in exact proportion as he discovers the depth of his own depravity; verily, he is a living stone in that building which will appear in a short time in all its glory.

SERMON XIV.

THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT.

GALATIANS v. 17.

“For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other.”

IN the 13th verse, the apostle says, “Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.” Obedience is liberty. All who believe in Jesus Christ are free from three things: free from the command as a covenant, free from the curse of God’s violated law, and free from the tyranny of sin. Nevertheless, sin is an inhabitant of the bosom of every believer while here below, and hence the salutary caution—“Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” They are freed from the law as a covenant, to be eternally conformed to it as a rule.

The essence of God's holy law is the same wherever found. Ask the angels. They would tell you that conformity to the law of God evinces itself in heaven in love to God, and in love to each other. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." A man loves his neighbour as he ought to love him, in consequence of loving God; for we never love man as we ought to love him, till we love God. Man is not wealthy enough to love his fellow creatures till he finds his wealth in the love of Deity. Hence the apostle presents his fellow-believers with a test—Love to the brethren as a proof, not only of the life, but of the energy of true religion.

God was first loved, and in that love their brethren were loved: "But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." We read with astonishment the history of cannibals; but let us not forget what we are, ourselves, all naturally delighting in destruction, one chief instrument of which is the tongue, by far more formidable than the teeth. It is said of the serpent, when drinking, that he is very cautious, lest his poison should descend with the water. At the root of the tongue there are two streams of poison, which are unlocked in evil speaking:

one descends in self-destruction; the other goes forth into civil society, creating confusion and every evil work. "This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." In the Spirit—the mighty power of God must preserve us every moment; for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other. Believers are called in Scripture men wondered at. No other being was ever circumstanced as they are in time. They have a ceaseless conflict within their own bosom. In heaven alone purity resides. Hell is the seat of sinfulness in the abstract. This is not the case with the believer; but evil inhabits his bosom, and will as long as he is on this side eternity. The life of faith is indissolubly connected with the high priesthood of Jesus Christ in heaven, and this necessarily implies imperfection. Individuals who have contended for perfect obedience in this world only convince us that they know not what they say, and are imperfectly acquainted with the law of God. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.

Consider the first principle. It is called Flesh: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Two distinct offsprings. The former tracing its ancestry to fallen Adam, the latter

immediately proceeding from God; from him who is the Father of spirits.

I need not tell those who read their Bibles with attention, that man, under the influence of corruption, is called flesh—"All flesh is grass." True, indeed, there is a sense in which he may be said to be a spiritual being, because he is possessed of an immortal spirit; but the term flesh seems to be awfully appropriate, because he is wholly and exclusively under the dominion of matter. Left to himself, he never, under any circumstances, ascends above it, but is wholly conversant with it. In the text it implies the evil principle that inhabits the bosom of man. It is called the old man—the natural mark of body and soul. It is the mighty autocrat of humanity in the wreck of the fall. It is called man, because it has completely taken possession of the whole man—the intellect, will, and affections; and consequently, by means of its exclusive influence on the soul, tyrannizes completely over the body; for the body is but the instrument of the soul in rebellion against God. "Put ye off the old man and his deeds." The old man still—the principle of evil precisely the same; not changed, for it does not admit of any change. It must be destroyed, or it will eventually involve the soul in all the horrors of hell. No one can weaken the power of human corruption but

God. Sin is such a mighty monster that none can bind him in fetters of iron and imprison him, but the almighty hand of God himself. If we are acquainted with ourselves as sinners, this truth is written within our bosoms, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit." "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit;" this is not only pure, but purity itself, as it comes from God. The emotions of sin may be very vivid, sometimes interrupting the emotions of the new principle while engaged in the service of God himself. In the operation of weaving, different materials cross each other in the warp and woof, in order to make one whole; and this, alas! is the case with the family of heaven here below. Sin and grace are perpetually crossing each other, and the believer sins as long as he inhabits this frail tabernacle. I appeal to the seventh chapter of Romans, as well as to the text, for the truth of what I have stated.

To come now to speak of the Spirit. That spiritual offspring which is born of God is called the new man. It is, if I may so speak, the junior offspring, the junior disposition; the offspring of the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven. We derive nothing but what is evil from our first parent, and nothing but what is good from the second; from the latter we derive all the good he has to bestow on finite being.

This new man, this spiritual man, is inward ; it is hidden ; no eye can see it, but that of God himself. In the first instance, whatever spiritual life we possess we are not conscious of it. When God first blessed us with our natural life, we were unconscious of the blessing ; and how came we gradually to know that we were human beings ; that we were possessed of faculties capable of being improved to our own good and that of others ? By the exercise of those faculties : and thus it is with the new man. I do not deny that it may be otherwise ; for there are cases where the individual seems to be born a giant, and to be ready to achieve a giant's work. Witness the thief on the cross. But these instances are very rare.

Corruption has its root only in humanity. Not so with grace. This springs alone from God. The new man lives in him ; his head is above the skies, his feet lower than hell ; and the reason why he is destined to be a conqueror is, that he fights in and under the inspiration of Heaven. God himself is his parent—God is his life—God is his energy—God himself teaches his hands to war, and his fingers to fight.

2. These two principles are in a state of ceaseless warfare, ever opposed to each other ; they are like two armies, sometimes encamped, at others engaged in terrible conflict ; but whether apparently engaged or not, each seeks the

destruction of the other perpetually. Between two contending armies there is frequently a cessation of hostilities—a truce is agreed to on both sides, and, not unfrequently, even civilities, pass between those who are bitter enemies to each other on the common ground of contention: but in this conflict there is no cessation; here there can be no truce; they are, and must be, ever opposed, till one fall: one *must* perish, and the other live eternally. This is a truth not to be learnt satisfactorily in the abstract; God cannot so teach any. Situated as we are, it is an utter impossibility. Beware of having heads full of religion and hearts full of sin. Believe me, these admonitions proceed from the most affectionate respect for you, and interest in your best welfare. Truth is the most respectful guest that can enter into the ear of Deity; and the truth that discovers you in the midst of hypocrisy and deceit, comprises the highest honour that a minister can confer on you, and the greatest good that he can do you.

Sin, says the believer, pursues me wherever I go. It is with me whatever I am engaged in. I cannot preach without sinning—I cannot pray without sin—I cannot praise without it. And is the weak child of Heaven—he says sometimes, addressing himself in the pungency of grief)—is it possible that I can, in the midst of these things,

be a child of the living God? Yes, my brethren, most assuredly: where there is no conflict there can be no grace. The warfare I am dwelling upon is absolutely indispensable; essentially requisite to a state of grace; according to the whole tenor of scripture, echoed by the experience and testimony of believers in every age of the church.

3. I would consider the wisdom and valour evinced by this new principle. It is illumined by the Spirit and by the truth of God; and not by one without the other; this is impossible. The divine Spirit has covenanted to teach men; but under the influence of his own truth. In his infinite goodness and mercy he has given to us the volume of inspiration. The canon of scripture is now, therefore, closed, and the reason why we have it in our hands is, that we may keep our eyes perpetually fixed on the truth of God, while he, by his Spirit, strengthens the principle within. This may be illustrated by a variety of comparisons taken from nature.

The sun, for instance, does not give me an eye; God alone can confer this organ; yet it is equally true, my eye must attain its full vigour in the light of the sun: so the external means are absolutely necessary to teach us what God is, and to develop all the principles of the new man, to clothe it with the panoply of Deity, and to lead it on from battle to battle, and from vic-

tory to victory, till the last battle is eventually fought, the last victory won, and the fruits of triumph enjoyed for ever and ever.

A skilful general surveys the field of battle, fixes his eye on different positions, and says, Let such a position be well defended, and the victory is ours. Reasoning from analogy, there is in this something illustrative of our spiritual warfare. There are posts and positions which our great Captain would have us perpetually defend; and when the enemy are quite out of them, we are invariably found to be conquerors. Let us now take a survey of the human field, and ascertain those points which our God would have thus securely kept. The most important that presents itself to our attention, is the *conscience*. This is to be purged and kept pure by faith in the atoning blood of Christ. A polluted, guilty conscience is the strong hold, the citadel in which Satan sits enthroned. Could you drive a guilty conscience from the spirits of the damned, you would unbar the gates of hell and usher its inmates into realms of bliss. This then is the post from which the enemy is to be driven. The conscience is the only faculty of man that admits of perfect purity in time, and it may echo the acquittal of God through the merits of Jesus, as the conscience of an angel echoes the language of innocence. There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

If you have paid attention to the workings of your own bosom, you can easily follow me. Have you not proved what I have been saying, when you have sometimes courted a guilty conscience in returning again and again to some beloved sin? Memory, in its bitter reminiscences, may be recording in the bosom of some here before me, the awful consequences of neglecting the conscience. Some one may be saying, Alas, sir, it is too true; and but for the God of heaven and earth I should long since have perished.

Peace of conscience is one of the greatest blessings of the covenant of grace. Mark the wisdom as well as the love of the Saviour—his disciples had all forsaken him and fled: it is true, it was the surprise of the moment, still it was disgraceful. But when he first met them afterwards, he said, “Peace be unto you.” Peace to the conscience; this drives out the enemy at once. The Saviour, after he rose from the dead, purged their consciences to make them faithful warriors. And this is what you and I need at the present moment. May God of his infinite goodness confer on us this invaluable blessing; for “blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” The enemy, driven from the conscience, must quit the field. “There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ

Jesus"—now mark—"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." This is the consequence of there being no condemnation; and it will be found to be an universal rule, that when the conscience is purged, the pulse of heaven beats high in the human soul—the spiritual health and vigour of God will flourish, and the hosts of hell will be obliged to abandon all their strong-holds in the human heart. Plead then the blood and righteousness of Jesus against every charge. This is what the apostle did, and this is what he teaches his brethren to do in the exercise of faith. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." When faith lays hold of this blessing the conscience is clear. See how the hosts of hell flee away. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, (as it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." All enemies in full flight. This has been repeatedly verified when the children of God have been tried again and again, by the most cruel torments. The history

of the church tells us that their persecutors, after having ingeniously devised every possible method of torture, have been obliged to desist, weary of tormenting; and let me remind you, that the first, the great, secret consisted in being blessed with a conscience void of offence. The purity of God and the might of God, took possession of the citadel; and in the midst of all their weakness, enabled them to triumph over the hosts of hell.

Consider the final victory. This is not achieved till the moment of dissolution: while in this tabernacle there is continual warfare. The enemies that assail us to-day will return to the attack to-morrow; and we are to defeat them to-morrow as we did to-day, by keeping the eye of faith fixed on the Saviour. We are to live on his fulness every moment; and if guilt assail the conscience, we are to learn in the light of his truth, and under the influence of his Holy Spirit, how to expel the enemy. "Little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not; and if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." See how the foe is attacked in front and rear, surrounded by divine truth. O attend to these things, for we stand in need of the truth every moment. Remember, there is an advocate above, and that the blood of Christ cleanseth

from all sin. God grant that we may be founded on this truth, and every enemy will soon be beneath our feet.

To conclude. Are there any of you strangers to this conflict? If so, you are dead in trespasses and sins. Hell from beneath expands to receive you; the curse of God is descending like fire from heaven upon your heads: you are in the state of Sodom and Gomorrah, only you may yet escape; and my earnest prayer is, that the blessing may be yours.

Again: Learn to distinguish between the workings of natural conscience, and the spiritual conflict of which I am speaking. The workings of natural conscience begin and end with man himself. Conscience disturbs him frequently, and it may sometimes roar in thunder; but in process of time his sense of the evil of sin diminishes; he views it through an inverted telescope, and as he travels from it in the journey of life, it vanishes into nothing. This is only the working of natural conscience, under the influence of which men heal themselves like dogs by licking their own sores; whereas, an almighty physician is absolutely necessary. In the case of natural conscience, men dream of putting their own sins to death; but this is but a dream. How different where the grace of God lives! God himself, Christ in all his mediatorial glory, must

appear, heal all the wounds of guilt, and arm his child with himself to meet his enemies in the field of battle. The believer, when he reviews his sins, committed years ago, sees them of the same dimensions as if they were of yesterday, and his only refuge is the righteousness of Jesus. He views sin as the Saviour viewed it when suffering on the cross; and this is the reason why he is conscious that the health of God must flow into him, or he must perish for ever.

A word or two to the weak. Some of you are exceedingly distressed: you are troubled with the motions of sin perpetually, and incapable of believing in Christ so as to realize the establishment of the peace of God in the conscience, as a blessing which you may call your own. I will tell you in what your weakness consists—in not being able to make use of the blood and righteousness of Christ as he intended. Do you imagine that the strongest believers are strangers to the enemies that live in your bosoms? Oh no; but they are better acquainted with the Saviour, they are better able to wield the sword of the Spirit; they realize the truth, that they are justified from the guilt of sin; hence their triumph; they meet their enemies, and drive every foe before them in the strength of the living God. I beseech you to pray that he may enlighten and strengthen you, to see what there is in the Sa-

viour for you ; that you may learn this important lesson—that you must triumph in the presence of your enemies, not in their absence. “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies,” says the Psalmist.

Sin is suffered to live in the believer’s bosom to promote the growth of holiness. Paradoxical as this may appear, it is a certain truth, and the believer discovers it to be so in his own bosom. Several things might be mentioned. It humbles him ; it drives him from himself to the Saviour. See how humiliation teaches us to find honey in the carcase of the lion, and eat the sweets of the land of Canaan while travelling through the wilderness.

Lastly. “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” Remember, that in yourselves you are not wiser or stronger than the weakest, and you are still on the field of battle. You are called on to exercise vigilance. See that your sword is bright, and that you are armed with the “whole armour of God, that you may stand in the evil day,” and triumph for ever and ever.

SERMON XV.

THE CLEANSING EFFICACY OF THE BLOOD OF
CHRIST.

1 JOHN i. 7.

“ If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

THE utmost that can be said of the believer, first in time, and afterwards in glory, is, that he is a perfect contrast to what he once was. If we are not individually and daily endeavouring to present others with a contrast to what we once were, either we are hypocrites, or grace is at a very low ebb. The apostle presents us here with a striking contrast: “ If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.” Language this, which might give offence to the feelings of some.

It is a mercy to analyze our feelings, and know how much in them is worthless, and what of sterling value. "Walk in darkness;" that is, in ignorance, folly, and delusion. "But if we walk in the light," &c. Light is opposed to darkness, and involves knowledge, spirituality, and godly sincerity. "We have fellowship one with another." He who is upright before God, must be lovely before men. He who loves God, necessarily loves his fellow-creatures.

"They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." The peace of God cannot live in the conscience unless this be the case. Under the rich and refreshing influences of the divine Spirit, we are to realize these blessings as our own. This is expressed in an interesting passage in the Acts: "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." (Acts ix. 3.) The lovely deportment of Christians has been eminently blessed by God to the conversion of souls. May it be our ambition to be daily preachers of the gospel! "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and" - what? praise you? no, but "glorify your Father which is in heaven." The Christian is not a man who delights to show himself. He wishes, as he ought

to wish, to give prominence to his God. He wishes to show what he does himself at any time, only that he may reflect the glory of him who has bought him with his blood, that he may sanctify him by his Spirit. "Fellowship one with another;" first with God, and then with each other. The glory of God and the welfare of each other are to be sought here, and then for ever.

The effects of divine truth on the human heart, and then on the life, are the most glorious testimony to the truth of divine revelation. The peasant may present them to every one, as well as the philosopher, who astonishes the world with his discoveries. "If we walk in the light," &c. "And the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." The proof of this, is our walking in the light. Purity, in its effects, evinced in the life, is a clear proof of the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ.

1. The blood of Christ cleanses from sin. The atonement constitutes the peculiar glory of the christian religion. In a meritorious point of view, it is the source of every blessing; first on earth, and then in heaven. All blessings flow from it;—forgiveness, justification, and freedom from the guilt as well as the pollution of sin. No other religion has an atonement for sin. Every other is poor—ininitely below poverty:

not only destitute of every good, but replete with every evil. Every other prepares man for an eternal weight of woe. Beware of that charity which makes God a liar; which destroys the souls of men. According to it, nine-tenths of the human race go to heaven. But what is the testimony of truth? What is the testimony of every enlightened believer?—of every one whose bosom is obliged to echo the truth of God? “The whole world lieth in wickedness.” “Broad is the road, and wide is the gate that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.” “There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The sacrifice of Christ reconciled God and man to each other. Some say, it is not correct to assert that God was reconciled by it. But God must be reconciled: divine justice never could consent to the redemption and salvation of fallen man without a sacrifice. And what is divine justice but God in his justice? There is nothing in this in the least degree inconsistent with the eternal love of God. God in his justice was reconciled by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and man is reconciled by the application of the same blood to the conscience; reconciled to each other in Jesus Christ. See 2 Cor. v. 19.

2. It cleanses only because it atones ; it cleanses in exact proportion as it atones. Some may be deeply convinced of sin, and obliged to feel the strength of the reasoning from their daily conflict with sin ; and perhaps in a moment of despondency they utter this soliloquy : “ I shall never conquer ; I shall be trampled under foot for ever ! ” You lose sight of the covenant of God ; you lose sight of Jesus Christ and of the atonement. Satan wishes no more. God never intended that you should do what you are attempting to do ; he never intended that you should conquer in your own strength ; that you should cleanse yourself ; that you should impart to yourself the blessing absolutely necessary to make you triumph over all your enemies.

The blood of Jesus Christ purges the conscience from dead works, because it satisfies the justice of God. “ If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh ; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ! ” (Heb. ix. 13, 14.) The sacrifice of Christ is richly and strikingly represented as an atonement by Daniel, in delightful connexion with the blessing emanating from it :—“ To finish the transgres-

sion and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to anoint the most Holy." (Dan. ix. 24.) It is described by Zechariah in an equally striking manner, as "a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness." The Saviour died before his side was pierced: God must be satisfied before man is cleansed. All the divine perfections were satisfied, when he cried on the cross, "It is finished!" Mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other. The reconciliation of God is evidently involved in these things. It was necessary that Deity should first be satisfied. He first atoned for sin, and then the fountain opened. There is every thing in this to satisfy the most scrupulous, the most guilty conscience. God is satisfied: why should not I be? Its perfection as a fountain, is commensurate with its perfection as a sacrifice.

3. The blessing is received and experienced by faith. The Spirit sprinkles the conscience by faith in Jesus Christ. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." (Rom. iii. 25.) By faith the believer discovers that the bosom of God is full of peace and love towards him; thoughts of peace, and not of evil:—"God, who knoweth the hearts," &c. purifying their hearts by faith. That faith

which justifies, invariably purifies the heart. It was intended to be exceedingly active: it first justifies the person, delivering him from condemnation, and then prepares him for heaven. The Holy Spirit not only cleanses, but keeps clean. "Herein do I exercise myself," says the apostle, "to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man." This is the effect of the fountain. It is a living fountain. The blood of the Saviour is living blood; it involves in it the life of God. We are not to suppose that the polluted soul can be cleansed as we remove impurity from matter. The life, the energy of the divine essence, must be engaged in cleansing the sinner from his sin, and keeping him clean for ever.

Learn from this a few lessons. Prize all the means and ordinances of God's appointments, public and private. Some may ask, How are we to know that we honour the ordinances of God as we ought? When you travel through them till you meet God, determined never to rest happy in and with them till you do so. This truth is exemplified by David, in a striking manner, again and again. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, and behold the beauty of the Lord." It was not enough for him to go to the temple, to be engaged in the

ordinances of God; more was necessary: he must find God, and know him as his God, and delight in his service.

Are there any satisfied with a routine of services? It is astonishing how subtle and deceitful the human heart is. Examine yourselves and see if you have any thing of the experience of David. "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee." Here are the rich effects of the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. God grant that we may daily experience them!

Secondly. If you do justice to this truth, you will meditate much on Jesus. There is something analogous to this in human nature. We naturally think much and frequently of those to whom we are attached, especially if our attachment arises from obligations we can never fully repay. "My meditation of him shall be sweet," says the Psalmist. He spoke at times of the Lord with so much ecstasy, that he seemed wholly to forget himself, while dwelling on the praises of him who loved him, and bought him with his blood.

Lastly. Frequently converse with God, not only in prayer, but in praise. "Pray without ceasing." A spirit of prayer here flourishes most in a spirit of praise. God grant that we may

know this; and, in knowing it, we shall be assured of our salvation. The truth of God—God himself will be the element of our souls; we shall be assured of our redemption and salvation; and shall soon be eternally delivered from all sin, when prayer shall be ended, and praise shall live eternally.

SERMON XVI.

GOD THE PORTION OF HIS PEOPLE.

PSALM lxxiii 26.

“ My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.”

DAVID seems at one period to have contemplated the wicked with a degree of envy, till, as he tells us, he went into the sanctuary of God; when the light broke in upon his mind, and then he understood their end. True religion is like the sun: it does not illuminate one object only, but every object; it places the universe before us in its

proper light; and so does the truth as it is in Jesus. Neither the intellect nor the heart can attain maturity, but under the influence of divine truth. Logic, languages, mathematics, and science, all are insufficient; while the knowledge of God in Christ will eventually crown the meanest peasant with an intellect sublimer than that of an angel.

“ Then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down to destruction. As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest thou shalt despise their image.” And to what does he compare life? To a dream: while his reflections end, where they ought to end, in humility and self-reproach. “ So foolish and ignorant was I; I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by thy right hand.” This is the genuine experience of true religion: we behold portrayed here, in a very striking manner, the effects of communion with God; and the truth is presented to us in the most interesting manner possible, written not with pen and ink and paper, but indited by the finger of God on the fleshly tablets of the heart.

“ My flesh and my heart fail.” David appears at this time to be anticipating the dissolution of his frail tabernacle, and to be contemplating death,

judgment, and eternity. Some of you know what it is to have your nerves unstrung, and the exquisite pain that frequently accompanies nervous affections. Individuals thus tried seem to stand in need of peculiar support from above; and I shall not be presumptuous when I add, that the Christian is then the peculiar care of a covenant God. Satan, if suffered so to do, would drive the individual thus circumstanced into despair and suicide; but God has provided a remedy, and that remedy comprises himself. In the decrepitude of age, all the faculties of the body, and sometimes those of the mind, fail: God has promised to be with his people at that season, and to lead them on through the valley of the shadow of death, to a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

God is the portion of his people. And,

First. He is a good portion. Without God, nothing is good to any intellectual being. With God, every thing becomes the source of good. God is good in himself, infinitely good, and he gives himself to his people as their portion in all the glory of his perfections; and every thing he brings with himself is pregnant with good, for "all things shall work together for good to them that love God." He is good, and he converts into good for us every thing that we have changed into evil. The case is wholly reversed by a

covenant God in Christ, and every thing that was cursed becomes replete with blessing. How different the portion of those who rest in any thing short of a covenant God as their portion. Every thing that is good in itself is converted by them into a source of evil. All the bounties of Providence, all the means of grace, every thing is charged by the transgressor with evil. Where is folly to be found? In transgression. Where is wisdom to be found? Only in obedience.

In the second place, God is a sufficient portion. Sufficiency cannot be found for us in any being but God. No dictionary can give us the meaning of that little word, enough; all the pursuits and all the attainments of man have never yet been able to satisfy: and there is a twofold want—they want an object that can satisfy, and what they possess they cannot fully master. The scholar is perpetually convinced that his ignorance is greater than his knowledge. Read the history of ambition, and you find all infinitely short of enough. Alexander wept that he had not another world to conquer. So the desires enlarge in the pursuit of created good. In every point of view, God is the only sufficient portion for man. Nothing can suffice, nothing can fill the human heart, nothing can satisfy it but God; and it should never be forgotten, that he presents us with his own spiritual perfections in so strik-

ing a manner in the person and work of his Son, that they are more easy of comprehension than any thing else.

You cannot explain the abstruseness of science to a peasant ; if you attempt it, he says, I cannot understand you ; but open to his view the perfections of God, as exhibited in the Saviour's mediatorial work, and he enters into them with more than an angel's intellect. This is the rich eternal feast provided by God for the human soul : saints are now before the throne, gazing with intense delight on the divine perfections as they are exhibited in the person of Jesus Christ.

Nothing is suitable as a portion to man but God himself. Every thing provided by the Creator for the support of our frame, partakes of the nature of that frame. The food we eat is taken from the ground whence we sprang, that food is of the same nature as the body ; of the earth, earthy. But man is an intellectual being also ; and he requires for his intellect a suitable portion. When we come to scrutinize the rich treasure of true religion, how mean, how contemptible, how grovelling, are all the pursuits of men ! To him who lives under the mighty influence of religion, the society of the wicked is painful, not from hatred to them, but hatred of their wicked ways : compassion for them fills the bosom of the believer. There is another thing

peculiarly interesting ; and that is, that God delights supremely in the friendship of those who are naturally transgressors : this is the reason why he gives himself to them as their portion in his Son for ever : and we are more capable of entering into friendship with Deity than those who never transgressed his holy law.

Thirdly. He is the eternal portion of his people. He was the portion of angels that fell ; but not their eternal portion : and that he is not their portion at the present moment is their own fault. But the Christian can say, “ He is my portion for ever.” Every thing proves this in the clearest manner : the work of Christ, and the promise of God. Here is a remedy when we are under a deep sense of our unworthiness. Every experiment was made that was necessary to let the creature know what he is disposed to do when left to himself. Angels were suffered to fall, and man was permitted to fall. It was not necessary. God showed the universe what the creature could do, and would do, without the strength of his grace, and he seems thus to address the world in what he does. Now look at me. You have beheld your own weakness in your own work : look at my strength ; you have had lamentable proof of your own weakness : see how I can raise from the ruins of the fall.

There are those who tell us, that the know-

ledge of God as our portion, cannot be attained on this side the grave; but what says the psalmist? Let us imagine the inquiry proposed to him: he would immediately furnish us with such proofs as the following, of his own knowledge, for the instruction of one who is desirous of knowing, scripturally and accurately that God is his portion.

In the first place, the object with which he is desirous of being most intimately acquainted is God. Look forward to eternity. We shall then be more intimate with him than with any being. Here is the promise: "Then shall ye know if ye follow on to know the Lord." "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might: let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me." Was this true under a comparatively dark dispensation; and is it not equally true at the present day, when we behold the Sun of Righteousness ascending the zenith of meridian glory? The consciousness of an interest in Jesus, and of his being our portion in life, in death, and for ever, was intended by the Lord as a little heaven to be carried within our bosoms, while travelling through this wilderness to the mansions of eternal blessedness.

Another reason which he would readily assign

is, delight in communion with God. The believer can look back on the time when this was not his delight ; but he has long since been convinced of the utter insufficiency of every thing else. Who can tell, but he that has experienced it, what a sense of forgiving love is ?

A third thing from the Psalmist's lips would be, a heart and life delightfully exposed to the eye of Omniscience. This is a strong proof of what I may justly denominate spiritual integrity. Wicked men hide themselves from themselves, and they dream that they are hiding themselves from God. It is said of a certain foolish bird, that when pursued it hides its head in a hole, and fancies itself safe. This is what man does ; he hides his head in his own ignorance, and imagines that God cannot see him. The language of his heart is, How doth God know ? But what is the reply ? "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." Is it always to be so ? Oh no ! they must know God sooner or later, but in all the terror of his justice. And they shall know themselves too ; they shall be obliged to attend to what has been working in their minds. But the modest psalmist had hid himself in the rock of ages, and we see that the consciousness of the Lord being his portion produced the most satisfactory effect : it

gave a spiritual delicacy which felt hurt even at a stain. Hence his language, "Search me, O God, and know my heart," &c. If in the dead of the night, when we are all in our beds, we were suspicious that a thief lurked in the house, should we not rise, and go in pursuit of him, and not rest satisfied till he was safely lodged in the hands of justice? In like manner was he eager to find out his sins, that they might be consigned to the cross of Christ, and perish for ever.

The fourth reason the psalmist might assign would be this: I am disposed to forsake every thing that grieves the Spirit of God. We have often grieved his Spirit—every violation of conscience grieves the Spirit of God. It is said that God has no passions. This is true in itself; but let it be remembered that all the correct feelings of the heart (as well as the intellect) are to be traced to him; hence we see the propriety of using the expression, grieving the Spirit of Christ. If we value a friend, how careful are we not to wound his feelings; and oh may God teach us this divine art of reasoning when we are tempted to do any thing that shall grieve his Spirit and violate the dictates of an enlightened conscience!

The fifth proof he would give us, would, I think, be this. I am desirous of meeting God in my daily avocations. Man was originally created to con-

verse with God, not to be idle. Adam was to till the garden of Eden in his state of innocence, and of course to converse with God. Whatever a pure being is engaged in, converse with God takes place; when angels descend to earth to execute their heavenly missions, they converse and commune with God in all they do. With the sons and daughters of folly, business is an excuse for not conversing with the Almighty. God intended that our business should be filled with himself, and it cannot be attended with any real good unless it is. It is said that holiness to the Lord will, at some future period, be written on the bells of the horses. Whether it be literally fulfilled or not, it certainly conveys this idea, that the employment of peasants will be full of God, and that when the poor are conversing together, it will be in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

The last reason I will suppose this saint of God to assign is,—That he hailed the return of public ordinances with peculiar delight. It is a good sign of grace in the human heart when the believer looks forward to the Sabbath, and earnestly desires to see the sun ascend above the horizon on the sacred morn, that he may repair to the house of God, and join the saints in prayer and praise: a rainy morning will not keep him at home.

The public ordinances of Jehovah are more like heaven than any thing here below. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob, and if he love the gates so well, what do you think of the assembly? He is with us: let us thank him for his gracious presence. When the psalmist was absent from the sanctuary, he seems to lament it exceedingly. "How amiable are thy tabernacles," &c. He was deprived of those privileges, and longing ardently to be restored to them. In the 27th Psalm he has these striking words—"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord," &c. Let us imagine the psalmist applying this rich truth. He would immediately direct our eyes to the gates of heaven. See them open. See Messiah on his mediatorial throne. Soon you shall be with him for ever. You shall not only see Jesus, but all your friends. Death may separate you from them for a short time, but you shall all meet. Whatever you may have lost, every thing worth preserving shall be restored, to live through the countless ages of eternity. And you shall not only see Jesus as he is, but enter into the richest friendship with him. All the perfections of Deity, in the intellect, and in the feelings of humanity, will be involved in friendship with your Saviour; yes, the Sa-

viour, and his family around him, in glory. God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Let us not sorrow as those without hope, because we are parted for a season; we are parted only to make the meeting again more sweet, and that for ever. It will not be attended with that novelty which soon ceases here below; it will be ever new in heaven. He that does justice to these truths is like the boy at school, who has notched on a stick the days that must elapse ere he returns to his father's house. Every day he cuts off one, and says, I am a day nearer my home.

Thus it is with the Christian, and thus it will be with him who lives in rich communion with his God, till his heavenly Father sends down one of his ministering spirits, perhaps a legion of angels, to waft his child from earth to heaven.

SERMON XVII.

THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

MATTHEW v. 3.

“ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

A GOOD action can only flow from a right principle. If a man's principles be good his actions will be so. But we are none of us naturally good. All are estranged from, and the wilful enemies of, God, because he is infinitely the most perfect and glorious of all beings. We quarrel with God for his beauty and for his excellency, and this it is that proves the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

The Saviour here begins his sermon on the Mount—“ Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.” Here is a principle—poverty of spirit. He presents the fountain first, and then the streams that issue

from it. May God of his infinite mercy make us poor in spirit ! I would call your attention,

I. To spiritual poverty. Such is the poverty of man, that no finite mind can possibly calculate it. It baffles all description—it exceeds all conception of the human mind. There is only one who knows the whole ; that Saviour who suffered the wrath due to us, who drank the dregs of the cup of his Father's vengeance, and then filled it with the wine of the kingdom, his everlasting love, never more to be emptied again.

To do justice to this important subject, it is necessary to consider what man was in his original innocence, and what his wealth then was. If you wish to describe the poverty of an individual, to do it ample justice, you contrast his present indigence with the wealth he once possessed. It is by contrast that you learn his real state. Man in Eden was a wonderful being, created in the image of God, possessed of God, enjoying God ; and being possessed of God, possessed of himself. He looked abroad with delight on the lovely created scene around him, which had been presented to him by his God, but this constituted a very small portion of his wealth ; his riches consisted of God himself. By transgression he lost both. By this he forfeited every

peaceful and blissful enjoyment which he had in the possession of God. By transgression he forfeited himself as an eternal victim to the justice of Jehovah.

We read sometimes of a spendthrift who foolishly and wickedly squanders away his patrimony. Look back to Eden, and see the greatest spendthrift that ever lived. Our forefather, for a momentary gratification, squandered away infinity and eternity ; and by every transgression we are guilty partakers of the same : it is a new forfeiture of God and ourselves to the vengeance of insulted Deity. Consider man as a transgressor, wholly destitute of the Spirit of the living God ; he does not possess spiritual good in the least degree ; for, let it be recollected, no being ever deserts God partially. He is therefore, not only destitute of every good thing, in consequence of his dereliction from God, but he is at the same time deeply indebted to him. If God and man constituted the wealth of man in Eden, it follows that God and man constitute the debt that man owes to God. Momentous truth ! ponder it, I beseech you.

Consider,

II. Poverty of spirit ; or, in other words, the spiritual consciousness of our own spiritual poverty. This is only known from a consciousness

of the rectitude and spiritual purity of the law of God; the purity of its curse as well as its precept: for its curse is as pure as its precept. Let us not shrink from viewing the law as it is: listen to the thunders of Sinai, and view the dark cloud as it rolled along, till it burst on the head of our Redeemer, emptying its vengeance on his devoted person. Hell presents us with an awful view of the offended justice of Jehovah and its consequences; but nothing can give us a full and adequate idea of the truth till we behold the Saviour. When the eye of faith is directed to him every thing is seen at once. The individual is deeply convinced of sin, while into every wound inflicted by the law of God, flows the health of God himself. Do we know these things? if not, we are ignorant what poverty of spirit is. It consists in a consciousness of our own unworthiness, and of the love of God in giving his Son for us. God in the gift of his Son, in giving him as God as well as man, to the vengeance of his violated law, proves what I have said to be true—that God might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The sacrifice of a divine person to redeem us from the wrath to come, is perpetually represented in Scripture as an act of justice to all the perfections of Jehovah. If justice, I argue that there could have been no alternative, for justice admits of

none. Heart-rending truth ! They shall look on him whom they pierced.

The eye of an individual fixed on the Saviour under a sense of its own unworthiness, is the most lovely sight this earth affords. What has the Almighty done in giving his Son ? Justice required humanity, for humanity had transgressed ; but humanity was infinitely too poor. Justice then, to satisfy itself, required Deity as well as humanity : this, it is clear, could be accomplished only by the union of both. We find them united in Jesus, a divine as well as a human person, filling the precept as well as the curse of his own law with all his glory. May the Spirit of Jesus endear truth to us perpetually, that we may know what it is to descend into ourselves, and learn the worst that can be known, and the important secret of triumphing in that very moment by faith in Christ Jesus.

III. The blessing is theirs—a kingdom is theirs, a kingdom which God is determined to preserve for ever.

It is here not only that God re-ascends his own throne in the heart, but man also regains self-possession. This is partially restored to him here, and will be fully so hereafter. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost ;

righteousness by faith in the atoning love of Christ ; righteousness as a principle, the work of the regenerating Spirit of God, within, producing peace of conscience : and then, as a necessary consequence, joy in the Holy Ghost : a joy which the world can neither give nor take away. " Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." The kingdom of God can flourish only where this disposition lives. Till this spirit, which descends from above, takes possession of man, every thing will be exalted above God. It would surprise many individuals if they were told that they loved their dogs better than God ; but such is the fact. The very reverse takes place, when this poverty of spirit visits man : God is then infinitely exalted to the eternal glory, and man sinks into nothing in his presence, while he desires to be ever absorbed in the contemplation of God in Christ Jesus. When this spirit prevails, there will be a loveliness in the conduct of the individual towards his fellow-creatures. The thousands of evils which we witness at the present moment flow from the pride of man. They would be more than they are, so that this earth would be a little hell, did not God reign among the sons of men in a variety of ways unknown to us.

Every thing that is lovely in conduct emanates

from this poverty of spirit : the consciousness of extreme indert, and the consciousness that God has made the richest provision for us. It shows itself in all its loveliness to man. Never lay hold of any weapon but love : if you have any enemies, give them all the love you possibly can ; exhibit this spirit in all your intercourse with your fellow-creatures ; in your families, towards your wives, your children, your servants ; make them all feel that you love Jesus, that you are poor in spirit, and that it is the grand, extreme desire of your heart to be like him.

— May we be perpetually under the government of this spirit ; realizing from day to day the presence of our God, sinking with shame in ourselves, and rising with holy joy in the strength of our covenant head.

SERMON XVIII.

CHRIST IS ALL AND IN ALL.

COLOSSIANS iii. 11.

“ There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision ;—but Christ is all and in all.”

JESUS is God over all. Men must be born, some in one country, some in another, and in various situations. The different classes of society involve in them the good of all. But in a religious point of view, all differences are annihilated. In the sight of God there is only one thing considered : “ That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness.” The apostle rested on this exclusively.

Consider,

I. The essential glories of Christ. He possesses all things ; for this obvious reason, that he

possesses himself. No being but God can be possessed of himself. Christ, as God, possesses all things, in such a manner, that he cannot alienate them from himself: he cannot separate himself from any of his creatures. A man when he gives any thing to another parts with it; but with respect to every thing that God gives, he remains as fully possessed of it afterwards as he was before. Abraham calls him, "The possessor of heaven and earth." Created beings do not enrich each other; they cannot enrich themselves. Misers should know this. The accumulation of every thing finite only impoverishes the possessor. Would you be rich; your riches must be found in the wealth of Deity: would you be eternally rich; be possessed of God in all his glory. God is essentially rich; his wealth is his own essence.

II. Christ has purchased all blessings for us— all temporal and all spiritual blessings. Adam was ushered into the world as the monarch of all creation; but in a short time he rebelled against God, and his rebellion involved the forfeiture of all. It is true he was in a great measure reinstated, but only as the delegate of Messiah, who was not only to restore to him the blessings he had lost in the fall; but also to confer upon him all that God had to confer. Properly speaking, no positive good can flow from an absolute

Deity, to a being who is a transgressor. We know that the enemies of God receive much good from God, but that is only temporal good, and under a dispensation of mercy. Consider also, that an absolute God cannot visit the creature with all the good he has to bestow. Sin created a void in humanity, that nothing could fill but God. Satan did dreadful work in seducing our first parents to sin, but he prepared, so to speak, a glorious work for God. The wealth of Messiah appears, when we consider this, that he confers Deity himself; Christ confers himself as a blessing, and the Holy Spirit as a blessing.

III. All blessings are treasured up in Christ for the eternal use of his church; all the blessings which are necessary to keep the human soul alive for ever. These cannot live in finite being; only in the bosom of God himself. He never confers any vital blessings upon the soul without conferring himself; he cannot, for they are involved in the essential and mediatorial glories of the Messiah, that he may be "all in all." Every thing that is in the covenant is a purchase. There is a family purchased for the enjoyment of eternal blessings, and eternal blessings purchased for them. How rich then must the believer be, who has Christ as "all in all?" These are such ecstatic truths, that our frail frames could not bear

them in their full developement. If we were truly wise, Christ would be our all in all ; and God grant that he may be so, experimentally, to each of us. If we were truly wise, even our meals would involve Deity. This was evidently the case with Adam in Eden. In the bread he ate, in the water he drank, he tasted Deity, while his soul ascended in ceaseless worship from earth to the bosom of his Father. Let it ever be remembered, that perfection is provided for us as a blessing in the covenant, and purchased for us by the death of Jesus Christ. Do we love these glorious truths now? If we do, it is a striking proof that we are born of God ; “ of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.” In creation, the glories of the Deity remain undeveloped. Behold the infant Son of Mary ! God himself bending the heavens and taking our nature ; all the perfections of Deity in the graces of a man like ourselves. It was in the land of the curse that “ Mercy and Truth met together :” it was here that the tree of life was planted which shot its roots to hell, and raised its head to the skies, bearing the richest fruits ; fruits to be gathered by the hand of God and of his saints for ever.

In himself he confers all things. And what is the strongest proof that he confers all things on me? a disposition to receive all that he confers.

Hell, with all its horrors, is dearer to man than God, while left to his natural disposition ; “ I will have hell,” he says, “ as my portion, rather than part with my sins ; only let me eat sin like bread, and drink iniquity like water ;” this is the language of the human heart. Eternity will never reveal to us fully the real state of man. Flee from the wrath to come. It has been well said, that divine vengeance has leaden feet, but hands of fire. Woe to those who fall into the hands of that God who is a consuming fire !

Lastly. He will keep his family in the possession of all good for ever. As creatures, they would forfeit every blessing if left to themselves ; but all blessings are secured to them by God. The triumph of Christ’s humanity is the most striking pledge of this. Is his humanity eternally removed from the power of sin ? Most assuredly. Mine will be so likewise. Some individuals are afraid of these truths ; but they are essentially necessary to speak peace to the conscience of that man who is well versed in the science of his own heart. In heaven we shall be more intimate with Deity than with each other ; such is the exquisite sympathy of Christ with all his family : yet he will be as dependent on God as any one of his family ; and though sitting on the right hand of the throne of God, he will draw every thing from him. He is

the humblest of humanity at the present moment. When we consider the natural distance between the creature and the Creator, and contrast this with the friendship of God and his Son, how beautiful is it to see Christ removing the distance, and with all the loveliness of humanity leading his family into the bosom of Deity for ever.

Conclusion. Learn, first, to live in the daily habit of sacrificing, in principle, every earthly good. Do not say, "I cannot do this;" we can do any thing in the strength of God. We are capable of rivalling, aye, of excelling, angels in the service of God. They have never equalled the obedience of saints; fire and sword have tried the obedience of the latter. Connect with this another idea, which, though selfish in one sense, is yet encouraged by God. All the sweets of the creature cannot be enjoyed unless they are daily received at the hands of God, and daily presented to him. The Saviour received all the thorns into his own bosom, that he might offer to us the thornless sweets—the pleasures of friendship are dependent on piety.

Secondly. Learn to triumph in the loss of all earthly things. "Though the fig-tree blossom not, neither fruit be on the vine, the labour of the olive fail, the fields yield no meat, the flocks be cut off from the fold, and no herd be in the

stall ; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." When the primitive Christians were persecuted for the sake of Christ, they rejoiced ; and remember that the spirit of a martyr is as necessary for all. Nothing inferior to that spirit will do for any. The spirit of a martyr is necessary for attacking sin in its power and in its authority. The truth we have been dwelling upon will enable you to do both. I knew a pious man in the country : it pleased the Lord to visit his cattle with disease, and destroy many : his language was, "Take more, Lord ; they are all thine."

Lastly, look forward to the period when you will not only know that Christ is all and in all ; but you will also have, and that in a very short time, the friendship of Deity, and the fruition of God in all his glory.

Are you so well acquainted with your own hearts, that you feel you stand in need of a Saviour at all times ? Do you know what it is to have self let loose upon you, and to feel that you have no strength against it ? Do you know what it is at such a time to have recourse to Christ ? Verily then, you are in the hand of the Christian's God.

SERMON XIX.

PROSPERITY AND ADVERSITY.

JOB i. 21.

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.”

I THINK we may venture to consider Job as a type, not only of the Saviour, but also of his afflicted child; and as a type of each, we find him triumphant in the midst of his deepest distress. If we pursue the Saviour into the depth of his suffering, we shall see him a conqueror throughout: “and we,” says the apostle, “shall be more than conquerors through him that hath loved us.” The end we ought to have in view is this—to realize the blessing in our own experience. This is, indeed, heaven itself begun: the hosts of hell, who perpetually surround us, must be conscious that they are to be defeated for ever by those who are naturally worms of earth.

After Job had received the tidings from the last messenger (by far the most melancholy) of the death of his children, it is said that he arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped, and said, "The Lord gave," &c. A conqueror here : and whenever affliction, though under the influence of the malicious designs of Satan, has the effect of driving you to God, you may begin to anticipate an eternal triumph. We have a short account of the prosperity of this good man before he knew the day of affliction. We now find him distressed indeed, but still retaining his integrity, with a recognition of the goodness and sovereignty of the Lord ; blessing him in the day of adversity as well as in that of prosperity.

The first thing to which I lead your attention is, that all prosperity is from God.

This will be readily assented to by most individuals ; so will the truths of Christianity generally : but we stand in need of more than this— we must possess the truths of Scripture as a living principle in the heart. Ask yourselves, how far do I realize this truth, that every thing I have comes from God ? We shall find that we know very little of it ; and we have just reason to fall in the dust before God, when we consider how much we know in theory, and how little in experience. The apostle Paul asks this impor-

tant question: "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" Individuals quarrel with the election of God and with the election of grace: but the election of God pervades every thing. Every excellent difference, whether confined to temporal good, or of a higher kind, emanates from God. Why has God chosen to create a worm that crawls beneath our feet? Why has he chosen to create an angel that soars above our comprehension?—Who has made this difference? God. Why is the gospel preached in Britain, and not in China? It is the will of God. It is awful to think that individuals should be presumptuous enough to deny a truth which presents itself so strikingly in providence as well as in grace. At the same time, be it remembered that every deteriorating difference originates with the transgressor. There is nothing that is the creature's but imperfection—*mine* is written by God on all creation. "All the beasts of the forest are mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." No individual has an exclusive absolute right to any thing but God; no being has an absolute right in himself but God. Do we feel these things? Do we act upon them? Sin is ours, and the desert of sin; every thing else is God's—our property, our bodies and souls, are all his.

The second remark I make is this:

The connexion between sin and punishment

does not arise from an arbitrary decree of God, but from the nature of things ; yet, with respect to the punishment of sin, the time when it is to be punished proceeds from the sovereignty of God ; and the measure of punishment with which it is to be visited in this world proceeds from the same source ; for certainly it is punished even here. In the chastening of his child God is a sovereign ; he applies the rod of his chastisement to one, while another escapes with comparatively little suffering. Why this is done is known only to himself ; but it is not unfrequently accompanied by a conviction in the mind of the individual that it is for his benefit. If he is visited with prosperity, it is in love ; not less so if with adversity. Job does not go to second causes—he goes directly to the source. It is the Lord that taketh away. How far are we acquainted with these truths ? What glorious consequences would immediately follow, if we knew them experimentally !

Thirdly. Consider the principle of an individual who stands the shock of adversity, and appears more glorious than in the sunshine of prosperity. When we see a mighty effect produced, we naturally look for a mighty cause ; we naturally ask, How could Job exhibit such patience, such submission, under accumulated distress ? The root of the matter was in him ; his principle

was founded on his God : his wealth did not consist in created being. All the creatures around us were made to be satisfied with the creature : man was created for the possession and fruition of God himself. Till we know and feel this, we cannot be possessed of a right principle of action : till we are brought back to God, and reconciled to him by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, till we know him as our rock and our inheritance, we shall never be prepared for the storms of life. Individuals put an end to their existence : the reason is this, their gods are gods of gold ; but the believer, in being possessed of God in Christ as his portion, is prepared for every trial, and will finally triumph over every enemy.

Fourthly. Consider the striking proof which Job gave of his being possessed of the best of principles. It is proved from his own lips. He blesses the Lord in the midst of the severest dispensations. Read the history of Aaron : his sons had just been initiated in the priesthood, and probably the good man was looking forward with parental pleasure to their filling up his place, when the Lord visited them in judgment, and removed them into eternity. How does he demean himself under the trial ? It is said that he held his peace, evidently in principle blessing the Lord. Read the history of Eli, when young

Samuel was sent to reveal the chastisement which the Lord was about to inflict on his family. What does he say? "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

To apply the subject. Are you possessed of the things of this world? Has the Lord given you riches? Pray that he would give you a heart to use them to his glory. Remember that nothing is your own; you, and all you have, are the Lord's: let it be your cry, What shall I do for the Lord? This is the principle: the most practical divinity is the best divinity. Do not imagine this to be legality. What is the proof that we have learnt this lesson? A disposition to give to the Lord that which is his own.

SERMON XX.

CHRIST THE SHEPHERD.

(From a MS. in the hand-writing of Mr. Howels.)

PSALM xxiii. 1.

“ The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want.”

OUR spiritual wanderings are, in Scripture, compared to those of sheep, after having deserted their shepherd's pasture. Seduced by sin we go astray further and further from the Lord ; and if left to ourselves we should continue to do so for ever. This is the language of every one who is taught of God. “ The Lord is my shepherd :” “ By the grace of God I am what I am.” The dear Redeemer, “ the Shepherd of Israel,” finds all his sheep in a helpless state. By his word, and by his Spirit, he makes himself known to them as their shepherd. Being made sensible of their own weakness, and of his power and love, they afterwards follow him. “ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” (John x. 27.) “ When

many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him," and thus evinced themselves to be none of his spiritual fold, Jesus said unto the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Then Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." (John vi. 67, 68.) This is the bleating of the fold.

In dwelling on the Saviour's office as the shepherd of his people, I would observe,

- I. That he supplies all their wants; and,
- II. That he protects them from all their enemies.

I. He supplies all their wants.

The employment of a shepherd was not, in ancient times, the menial office which it is at the present day. The greatest men of antiquity, Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and many others, were shepherds. From the most eminent on earth, we ascend to the highest in heaven, even to "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," (Isaiah lvii. 15,) adoring his love and condescension in descending from above to become the Shepherd of Israel. Of old it was recorded of him, that he led his "people like a flock by the hands of Moses and Aaron." (Psalm lxxvii. 20.)

The wants of sheep are numerous.

1. They are prone to wander. The Holy Spirit, in comparing us to sheep, would teach us a lesson of deep humiliation. "We are prone to forsake God"—"My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them." (Ezek. xxxiv. 6.)

2. Sheep having forsaken their own pasture seldom or never return.

Sinners having once forsaken God never return of themselves. Without a shepherd they must necessarily perish. But, "thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out." (Ezek. xxxvi. 11.) And St. Peter, addressing himself to the flock of Christ, says—"For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (1 Peter ii. 25.)

The Lord Jesus Christ having made himself known to them as their Shepherd, supplies them with food.

The psalmist perused the book of nature with the eye at once of a poet and of a divine. Christ, his church, and the blessings of his gospel, are represented under the image of a shepherd with his flock lying near him, on the margin of a peaceful stream, ruminating on a rich repast in a fertile mead. He inspires his imagery with the

most sympathetic interest, by telling us in grateful transport, that he himself is one of the flock: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters." (ver. 2.)

All who are taught to see and to feel their own wants, and to experience the care and protection of the Shepherd of Israel, enter into the feelings of David, and gratefully echo his songs of thanksgiving and praise.

3. Sheep are subject to many diseases; so are we.

A shepherd is invariably the physician of his fold. This observation is peculiarly applicable to the good Shepherd. He is the only physician of his flock: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." (Psalm ciii.)

4. The young, the weak, and the burthened, a shepherd treats with the utmost tenderness. This truth again is eminently applicable to the spiritual Shepherd: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arms and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." (Isaiah xl. 11.)

Once more—to sum up the wants and the rich blessings with which he visits them, in his own words—"I will feed my flock, and will

cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick." (Ezek. xxxiv. 15, 16.)

As he supplies all their wants—

II. He protects them from all enemies.

Sheep are exposed to the fatal attacks of the bear, the wolf, the lion, and many other formidable foes, while no creatures are more incapable of protecting themselves. Here we are presented with a striking emblem of our many and mighty enemies, as well as of our own incapacity to preserve ourselves.

But as a shepherd is the protector and deliverer of his sheep, so is Jesus.

1. He protects them even from the approach of some enemies.

To explain this, I would observe that the absolute justice of God might have been the eternal enemy of all his enemies. "We all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others." (Eph. ii. 3.) We must therefore have perished even as others, had not Jesus exposed himself to that vengeance which was our desert. That we may, under the in-

fluence of the Holy Spirit, learn in some measure to prize the blessing, let us attend to what the Lord says in his awful address to the impenitent : “ I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion.” (Hosea xiii. 8.) Thoughtless sinners, may the Lord give you ears while I am speaking to you : you must believe in Jesus, overcome God, or perish everlastingly.

To all those who believe in him, the Saviour says, “ I am the good Shepherd ; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” (John x. 11.) He became the voluntary prey of vengeance, that his sheep might be spared. Justice is now not their enemy but their friend.

Again : Do we enjoy peace and communion with God, we owe the blessing to the good Shepherd. The vigilance of his eye, and the strength of his arm, preserve us from the jaws of the destroyer. Jacob, speaking of himself as a faithful shepherd, says—“ In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and the sleep departed from mine eyes.” (Gen. xxxi. 40.) “ He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” (Psalm cxxi. 4.)

The best shepherds among men, notwithstanding every care, may lose some of their sheep. Even some of Jacob’s flock were “ torn by

beasts," and others "stolen." (Gen. xxxi. 39.) But the Shepherd of Israel can lose none of his. We have his own word for their security: "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." (John x. 28.) This leads me to observe,

2. That when they are exposed to the most terrible enemies, Jesus invariably delivers them. This truth is typified and illustrated in a singularly striking manner by young David. Being summoned into the presence of Saul, who tells him, that in consequence of his youth he was not able to fight with the Philistine, he answers, "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear." (1 Sam. xvii. 34--36.) In the deliverance of the lamb, and in the death of the lion and the bear, we recognize a type of the deliverance of the church from the most imminent perils, as well as of the destruction of her enemies. Moreover, David, in contending, first with the lion and the bear, and afterwards with the Philistine, considers himself as a lamb rescued from extreme danger by the Shepherd of Israel, and thus richly presents us

at once with a type and with the antitype :
“ The Lord that delivered me out of the paw
of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he
will deliver me out of the hand of this Philis-
tine.” (ver. 37.)

Wanderers—Who among us are wandering at
the present moment like sheep without a shep-
herd in this dreary wilderness? “ Aliens from
the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the
covenant of promise, having no hope, and with-
out God in the world.” (Eph. ii. 12.) Momen-
tous question! barbed, winged, and guided
by the Holy Spirit, may it fly into the inmost
recesses of your bosoms! Is there any one in
this assembly obliged to make this confession:
“ I have been for years, alas! a wandering sheep;
my wonder is that I have not perished in the
wilderness. Who will convey me to the Shep-
herd? Mortally wounded by sin and Satan, I
cannot convey myself, and if left I must die.”

* * * * *

SERMON XXI.

THE ROCK.

1 CORINTHIANS X. 4.

“ They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them ; and that rock was Christ.”

WE have no idea of the mercy of God, for we have no idea of sin ; and no finite being can have. God is infinitely more merciful than is known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, now in his presence above.

We have various instances of his mercy : of temporal mercies as types of spiritual.

The rock mentioned in the text is one very interesting. See the account of it in the Book of Numbers. The rock in Horeb. Horeb signifies, left alone, deserted : it is typical of the humanity of Jesus ; which, united to Deity, is the medium of communicating the fruitfulness of God himself to our hearts. He was left alone on the cross. When he thirsted there, he was feasting

angels and pure spirits in heaven. He was deserted by God ; but he then loved him most. The strongest and most glorious proof of his love was when hell itself flew into his bosom. There is suffering in hell ; but there is no love to God there : this is the peculiarity of the Saviour's suffering. God has withdrawn from devils : he is hated by them. But when all blissful communion was withdrawn from the Saviour, and he was, in one sense, more destitute of comfort than even devils themselves, his love to God and man was more intense. No finite being could bear the absence of God and the plenitude of his wrath, as Jesus did.

The rock was smitten by the command of God : teaching us that Christ would be smitten for us. One would have thought that fire would have burst forth to consume the rebels ; but no—water to comfort them.

Again. No one but Moses was to strike the rock : Moses, the lawgiver from God. It was the law that smote Jesus : he was visited by it in the precept and the curse. “ Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. He was wounded for our transgressions ; bruised for our iniquities.” (Isa. liii. 5.) This could not have been, but by the law ; for, “ where no law is, there is no transgression.” At the same time, the precept was most gloriously

obeyed. The command, "Thou shalt love me with all thy heart and soul and strength," was most perfectly fulfilled, when the wrath of God was fully poured out upon the Saviour. His bodily pain was severe; more painful still, that devils should harass his holy soul; but most terrible, that God should visit him in his wrath.

Again. There was an instance of divine power in smiting the rock: the order of nature was changed. Far greater was it, when the Son of God died on Calvary: here is an instance of infinite power and infinite wisdom. He is therefore called the "Wisdom and power of God!" The Son of God, by the medium of his humanity, bore an infinitude of suffering, when he died on the cross.

Consider, again, the state of the Israelites, when the rock was smitten. Were they confessing their sins on their knees, and humbling themselves under the mighty hand of God? No—they were fighting against God, when water gushed out to allay the thirst of the rebels. O glorious mercy!—but far eclipsed by the sufferings of Jesus. What was the state of man when he died? What was the state of the Jews when he was smitten? They were giving a proof of the foulest rebellion ever known against the King of kings—earth and hell conspiring together against him.

God the Father was smiting his Son for those rebels.

God the Son was receiving into his bosom the hell they were earning.

God the Spirit was supporting him, while he endured the suffering. And,

Man was crying out, "Crucify him! crucify him! Not this man, but Barabbas! Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself! If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." (Matt. xxvii. 40.)

The religion of Jesus is adapted to a sinner in his worst estate. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans v. 8.) Oh the infinite love that flowed so richly while man was in rebellion against him! "Father, forgive them!" "Crucify him! crucify him!" "Father, forgive them!" The case of every sinner is the same, when visited by the Holy Ghost. He finds the sinner in precisely the state of the Jew, whether in the wilderness or in the judgment hall. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Ephesians ii. 1.) Dead to God—alive only to sin. May he bring home these truths to our hearts.

The blessing is not given to us for any good in ourselves. There is a twofold infinity between

man and the merit of any blessing at the hands of God.

1. The purest created being in heaven is infinitely below the possibility of meriting any thing at the hands of God.

2. The sinner besides deserves an infinity of woe. He is the wilful, willing vassal of sin, and deserves to be banished for ever from an infinitely holy and just God.

But he is visited in this state of sin. "Who remembered us in our low estate." When we were travelling faster than light to the abyss of destruction, he visited us in mercy. The religion of Jesus is given in the face of infinite indeliberate. Invoke then the power of the Holy Spirit, to subdue the enemies of your souls: if we conquer, it must be by the blood of the cross and the Spirit of the Lord. The waters gushed out, and the people drank freely and abundantly. See what followed the smiting of the Rock of Ages. What did the Holy Spirit do on the day of Pentecost? Peter, in his sermon on that day, did not conceal the truth; he did not excuse or palliate the sin of the Jews. And when the Holy Spirit brought home the truth to their hearts, convincing them of their sins, they were prepared to receive the blessing. What joy must have filled their bosoms when the blessing of salvation flowed to them; and how sweetly

will they for ever sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain?"

The world is felt to be a wilderness by him who is taught to prize Jesus. Have we found it to be so?—and that a greater miracle has been or must be wrought in us than on the rock in Horeb? The water supplied the camp of Israel during all their journey; they had no other stream.

There were two rocks; but they form one type. The account which we read of the second, is for the encouragement of backsliders. When barrenness is introduced into the heart, what is to be done? Speak to the rock; go to a throne of grace. When the soul is reproaching itself with ingratitude; in the darkest hour, when earthly and heavenly comforts fail; when heaven itself is heavy upon us, and the heavens are as brass; what is to be done? Speak to the rock! Approach in faith! Let not sin or Satan discourage you! Faith will live in the darkest season and the coldest climate. Come back, then; return, return, backsliders, unto the Lord! "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercy will I gather thee. In a little wrath, I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer." (Isa. liv. 8.) He'll break your stony heart, remove the gloom, give you peace again, and put

into your mouths the sweetest song. "And in that day shalt thou say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." (Isa. xii. 1.) "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." (Rev. vii. 10.)

SERMON XXII.

THE CHURCH A CROWN OF GLORY.

ISAIAH lxii. 3.

"Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."

A VERY interesting promise made to the church of God. God himself will not rest till Zion be as perfect as the hand of God can make her. His ministers cannot be silent; they must proclaim his truth till time shall be no more.

Verse 2. "By a new name"—in virtue of being united to the Lord: it comprises his own name, every name which he possesses. Many

passages might be quoted, if necessary. "This is the name whereby she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." (Jer. xxxiii. 16.) The name of God and of his church united: it comprises the dignity, essence, glory, and work of Christ. The name conferred on the church of Christ comprising the name of God himself.

Verse 4. The reason why she has a new name is, that she loses her old name. It is no disgrace to a woman to lose her own name when she takes that of her husband: is it so in the marriage of a prince with a peasant's daughter? but the wonder of wonders is, that the King of kings should be united to the daughter of the Amorite and the Hittite.

Notice three things. 1st. The church of God is highly prized; 2ndly, eminently honoured; and 3rdly, safely preserved.

1. Nothing is more highly prized. The church of God is dearer to him than all created beings. She is the dearest offspring of him who is essential love. What makes her precious in his sight? No finite being can tell. Why he prized her before he visited her, is known only to himself: infinite wisdom can do nothing without reason: he says he loved her, and in this truth we rest. She has no worth in herself, and is rendered precious by free, unmerited, unchangeable love.

We connect the idea of worth with crowns

and diadems. He loved her before he visited her, and quickens her to know him as her God. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 10.) The richest display of love which could be given—the gift of the most excellent of beings for the most worthless; nay more, sinners are worse than worthless. In one sense angels are worthless in his eyes. What idea can we form of that love which brought Jesus down to die for man in such a state? and nothing less than this could have redeemed us from the wrath to come. "God commendeth his love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." He gives us, in rich metaphor, the sublimest ideas of the love with which he loved her when dead in trespasses and sins. "He shall redeem their souls from violence, and precious shall she be;" so precious, that he will shed the blood of his Son in ransoming her. Her worth must be traced to the free and eternal love of God.

2. As she is so prized she is eminently honoured. Having paid such a price for her, he will beautify her by all that infinite wisdom, love, and power can do: for she is dearer than the aggregate of created existence. "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men

for thee, and people for thy life." (Isa. xliii. 4.) Precious first, and then made honourable by God.

We connect with crowns and diadems not only worth, but labour and skill—great labour and exquisite skill. Crowns and diadems are not common things; they are not in the hands of every artist; they are put into the hands of the most skilful persons, for they are to be worn by potentates. The earth and sea are ransacked to find ornaments for them. Could the Lord know what difficulty is, we might form an idea of the labour and expense with which he procures ornaments for his church.

He over-rules princes when embroiling the earth, and shedding the blood of thousands, that he may find his people; he says to "the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back."

She is not now worn on the head of the Lord, but is in the hand of the artist; and that hand his own: he will not trust her in any hand but his own; no other could finish it. "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold." (Ps. xlv. 13.)

3. As she is so precious and so highly honoured, she shall be safely preserved. Secure in his hands. Can any over-rule or overcome Omnipotence? then may they snatch the crown from the hands of Jehovah. The crown is in the hands of

Father, Son, and Spirit; the truth taught in the metaphor is the same which the Saviour delivered: "My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (John x. 29.) "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John x. 28.) The church of God is safe in the hands of the triune God. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.) Thou art in the hands of the triune Jehovah, in the hands of thy Elohim, O chosen of God. Being in his hand, and every ornament prepared for it, he will beautify himself with it. The essential glory of God is incapable of increase; but his church will be instrumental in displaying his glory more than all created existence. Will he suffer any to pluck it away? the idea is absurd and blasphemous.

Attempts are indeed made to destroy her. We have many enemies to fight against and overcome. God does not lead in the dark, but makes his people know that they are going to heaven by the light of his Spirit. Satan leads blindfold. He tries to destroy the church of God,

1. By error.

2. By persecution.

3. By snares and temptations.

But the Saviour has said, "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matt. xvi. 18.)

Am I built on this rock—am I secure in his hand—walking in his appointed means? The Lord will not suffer any moral agent to study his truths abstractedly. Angels cannot so study them; they dare not do it. And how does the Lord preserve his people? By teaching and strengthening them to triumph by the blood of the cross.

We have many errors, some more obvious, others more secret; the sovereignty of God is exalted against his authority, and his authority against his sovereignty: partial truth is the fittest medium to convey subtle poison: to dwell on a part of truth is eminently instrumental in the hands of Satan. No truth is fit for you to hear unless that which will be unfolded at the last day. That hearer is unjust to God, and his own soul, who will not hear all truth. Observe the skill with which he connects the end and means. It is unworthy of the Lord to conduct to a pure end without putting into our hands pure means. Be it our privilege to connect what God has joined, not leaping over any thing.

Religion is a personal thing. Whatever evil

we know of ourselves, it is better to know the worst; the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. If asked, Am I a jewel in the crown of God?—I prize *all* the doctrines of God; this is one thing. The Lord also invariably teaches his people to submit to, and delight in, the preceptive part of his word. This may be called legality; but it is the perfection of a moral agent to delight in obedience to God. The apostle says, “I delight in the law of God.”

* * * * *

We shall be frequently at the throne of God, and paying frequent visits there, we shall recognize both the sovereign and the crown: looking forward to that period, when, for the last time, he shall carry it in his hand, and, in the presence of an assembled universe, will put it on his own head to wear it for ever.

SERMON XXIII.

THE BLISS OF GIVING, &c.

“ It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

THE bliss of giving is the inhabitant of eternity —the bliss of receiving is the child of time.

The bliss of giving is supreme, as it exists in God. We are indebted to it for creation, preservation, and salvation : for the blessings and privileges we enjoy as strangers and pilgrims on earth : and all we hope to enjoy for ever.

God is infinitely holy ; therefore infinitely happy. He is infinitely holier than any other being, therefore infinitely happier.

The bliss of God consists, first, in the contemplation of his own perfections ; and, secondly, in the exercise of them. He must love himself, for he is infinitely worthy of it. All the love with which he loves himself, and with which the triune Jehovah love themselves and each other,

and all the happiness in which they contemplate their own perfections—this is the fountain of salvation to the church for ever. The Father, Son, and Spirit, entered into covenant, in all the glory and bliss of their own perfections; in infinite love to each other; and the salvation of man is comprised in the love and happiness which they enjoy from eternity:—“I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.” (Jer. xxxi. 3.) This is the love which gives peace more stable than the everlasting hills, which nothing can destroy. “Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him: rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.” (Prov. viii. 30, 31.) The delights of the Son and of the triune Jehovah (which were with them eternally) were those of giving salvation to man.

The bliss then of giving is the source whence all salvation flows. Witness the purity and bliss of the angelic host; but descend, and view, with the lamp of truth, the wants of man as a sinner: in the covenant of grace the character of God is fully unfolded: Jehovah fills the truth of the text with all his glory.

The angelic host have received less, infinitely, than those who are united to Christ, and are

recipients of his Spirit. View Adam in Eden, living on the bounty of the Creator, and then in his fall, permitted for the display of the beneficence of God: (the most limited sense of permission: he did not hinder it; he saw from eternity the certainty of moral evil, and determined to make it a means of bestowing all he had on his creature.) See, then, Adam formed in the image of God, trampled under the feet of Satan; knowing, in his own experience, nothing but the holiness of God; an abyss of wretchedness was opened—an abyss which could only be filled by God himself. Every enemy that could arise arose against man, between man and God; but the gift of Jesus was greater. A Son was given for rebels; and the gift of the Spirit is as glorious. Meditate on the glory of the gift. Father, Son, and Spirit! Jehovah, the fountain of all gifts, prodigal of himself! All the munificence of God is comprised in this one word—"I will be their God." He says not what he will do, but what he will be. Every thing is comprised in this gift—strength, peace, and joy. "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing." Thus the truth of the text exists primarily as a fountain in eternity, to which we are indebted for all.

When God gives, he gives what is infinite and eternal: when he receives, he receives only what is finite—"It is more blessed to give than to receive."

2ndly. Consider the bliss of giving as found in the creature: and to be led into this truth by the Spirit of God is to be most like God. See it first in the humanity of Jesus, where every truth is to be learned. He must have received; all created existence must receive from God. He had richly received; it was his delight to give. Where did he begin? with God. We must begin there too; and if we begin and end with him, the creature will be included. In the humanity of the Son we see what the creature is, united to Deity. He went about doing good; he healed the sick; he raised the dead; he forgave the vilest. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me"—in obedience, in suffering, and death. In the work of Jesus Christ created existence participates, as far as is possible, in the bliss of uncreated existence: and what is his bliss now? "He hath ascended up on high: he hath led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious."

Ye who are persecuted day and night with a sense of sin, and an evil heart of unbelief, see the glory of your God; look up, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted; see one who is

flesh of your flesh, and bone of your bone, participating with the essence of God in the bliss of giving pardon and peace.

All believers are called to participate with the Deity in the bliss of giving: in relieving the wants of their fellow-creatures. When the blood of Christ is applied to the conscience, the soul delights in his image and example; while his righteousness is dear exclusively, as justifying from all things. "Freely ye have received, freely give." (Matt. x. 8.) He who receives is made happy: he who gives makes happy all around. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Jesus began by giving himself to God. We must give ourselves, in him, to God: having done this, we are prepared to dispense his blessings.

To the unconverted.—Consider the fate of those who are ignorant of God in a state of enmity with him—in ignorance of him: and consequent stupidity of soul. This is never so seen as under the preaching of the gospel; and there is nothing more awful on this side eternity—God unfolding all his riches, inviting sinners to himself; and man rejecting all. We are in no danger of refusing an offer from an earthly monarch: life will soon be but a dream when one awaketh; the covenant of grace is pregnant with ten thousand times ten thousand more blessings than angels ever had; and yet it sounds in your ears but as a song.

To the desponding, who are destitute of comfort, though living carefully—God delights in mercy : he shows herein all his glory.

Do not insult that God, who sent his Son into the midst of the hell due to you, by doubting his willingness to save.

SELECT PASSAGES.

God in his essence is one ; yet in this essence there is a trinity of persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. If there be no distinction of persons, and no persons in the essence, there is no covenant. If there be no covenant there is no atonement for sin. To atone for sin, there must be one divine person to atone, and one to accept of the atonement. Our case required this ; there is no irreverence in saying it. We want the doctrine of the Trinity. “ Jehovah, thy gods is one God.” The rich ideas conveyed in this verse are the simplicity of essence, the plurality of persons, and the connexion between Jehovah and his people. We never find pronominals affixed to the name Jehovah, as my or thy. But to all the names that involve a blessing to us they are prefixed, while Jehovah, in his glory, pervades the whole. As Jehovah, he must be

faithful to himself; as Aleim—Father, Son, and Spirit, faithful to themselves and to their people. It would be infinitely inconsistent with the perfections of Jehovah to save a sinner otherwise than by Jesus Christ: “There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby they might be saved.” The manner in which we should study the Trinity is in worshipping the Trinity.

The second Person assumed human nature. It would be incorrect to say that the Father or the Holy Spirit assumed it. The subject is a mystery, to us incomprehensible; we therefore rely exclusively on the testimony of God: “When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” Jehovah, in the person of the Son, assumed our nature into the most intimate union with himself. It was not the assumption of humanity that constituted the son-ship of Christ. The *child born*, is the *son given*. “The word was made flesh”—“declared to be the Son of God with power.” The human soul of Messiah did not exist before he took flesh: if his soul pre-existed, he could not have been in all things like unto his brethren, as we are told that it behoved him to be. Humanity must involve a human soul as well as a human body. No one could have assumed the human nature so as to have con-

stituted one person, but God. He alone could do so, because he alone can fill, inspire, guide, and rule both with himself. Finite being could not do it. It was absolutely necessary that he should assume the human soul as well as the human body. Both had been defiled by sin. Justice demanded suffering from both, that an atonement might be presented: suffering not only active but passive. The human nature of Christ is called "that Holy *Thing*," because it was united to Deity. Mary was not the mother of Christ's person as God and man, but merely of his human nature.

Again, had Christ assumed a human person, his atonement would have availed nothing—he must have atoned for himself. A person in Jehovah, took upon him human *nature*, not a human person. This is a valuable distinction. The union subsisting between deity and humanity, is but one person, and that a divine person. It would not be correct to say, that one nature has taken another nature into itself; for that would be saying, that God, Father, Son, and Spirit, became incarnate: but we speak correctly when we say, that Jehovah, in the person of the Son, took humanity into the most intimate union with himself.

Had his humanity been a person as well as his deity, mark the awful consequence; what he did, would have availed nothing but for himself,

and consequently none of the blessings which he has now purchased for his family, could have descended to them.

The person is divine though united to humanity; and though both humanity and deity preserve their distinct attributes. It is an absolute impossibility for humanity to become deity, or for deity to become humanity; yet the attributes of each are to be ascribed to a divine person.

A divine person lived in this world, hungered, thirsted, and died in our stead. These things could not have been said of the humanity of Jesus Christ, had it been a distinct person. It is distinct humanity, though united to deity; yet we recognize but one person, and that a divine person. And though his humanity was called into existence here in time, yet it is correct to say, that Jesus Christ was the Creator of the world, because he was a divine person.

In consequence of the union subsisting between deity and humanity, all his offices are sustained and fulfilled, till his family are eventually ushered into the presence of his Father in glory. He was invested with his offices before he assumed our nature, but could not discharge them all before.

Let it be remembered, that he is not a mediator in his humanity alone; he began his mediation before his assumption of humanity. He was me-

diator between God and man before he took on him our nature, in consequence of his covenant engagement to take humanity upon him. But when we behold him by the eye of faith, as Abraham did through the vista of futurity, we see in him every thing we can possibly need—we behold all the glory of his prophetic, priestly, and royal offices. As God-man, we behold him fulfilling all his offices, and triumphing in all.

In considering the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, it is correct, and skilful to say, that a divine person died and suffered for us ; the just for the unjust. We are not to confine his mediation to either nature ; but as a divine person, his mediation is fully involved in both : his sufferings were of course human, it is an infinite impossibility for deity to suffer ; but as a divine person suffered and presented himself in human sufferings, those sufferings are as glorious as if it had been possible for his deity to suffer. It was a divine person that offered himself to God in the sufferings of his humanity ; and here we find every thing that the most guilty need : every thing necessary to present to us a God in the full effulgence of his glory. Creative power, and that energy which sustains all things in existence, will be infinitely and for ever beyond the ken of finite being : but with the spiritual attributes of God we shall be

most intimately conversant ; more so than with any thing else ; more so than with each other ; more so even than with ourselves ; for there is an important sense in which we shall know God better than ourselves. Dwell on this : it is not even a paradox, but a simple truth, calculated to administer the richest joy and triumph to the believer while here on earth, anticipating that weight of glory which is reserved for him in heaven.

A divine person, an infinite person, offered himself in all his glory, in the sufferings of the humanity of that divine person. When the body of an individual suffers, we immediately speak of the sufferings of the whole man : and I cannot help considering the union between body and soul as eminently typical of humanity and deity in the person of the Son of God. We cannot explain the union between body and soul ; yet we know the reality of the union. It is enough to know that every good is dependent on the will of God.

What think we of Jesus ? This involves another question. Why was the Word made flesh ? It became him, by whom are all things, and for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. He came to satisfy the law of God as a covenant. As soon as it was violated by Adam in Eden, all human obedience

would not have availed in the least degree. Till the sufferings of Christ were completed on the cross, he was under the law, its command and its curse, to satisfy it in every respect ; not only with obedience but suffering. This was the end God had in view in the redemption and salvation of his chosen. Here we discover the mystery of godliness. Here we behold the wisdom of God in devising the means of glorifying himself that he might save sinners. The present moment becomes awfully interesting to all who have been taught to think as they ought to think ; that is, when things are viewed in the light in which Jesus viewed them when here on earth. Every perfection in Deity in all its glory invites to a covenant God.

How different will be the second from the first coming of the Lord Jesus ! We shall see him as he is and be like him. His presence will change not only the souls but the bodies of his people into his glorious image ; and, united in the bonds of an everlasting covenant, all the perfections of God will interpose between them and moral imperfection. In the person of Jesus will be unfolded all the lovely and all the terrible glories of God, constituting, at the same moment, the heaven of his friends and the hell of his enemies.

Have we been taught to feel our absolute need of him ? It is the most difficult lesson to learn,

to rely exclusively on his atonement for pardon ; on his righteousness for justification ; on his strength and fulness for perseverance from day to day. This must be our experience ; there is no alternative. We must be taught of God. Humanity has been greatly honoured in being converted into a medium for reflecting in all their effulgence the perfections of deity. " Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The existence which is from eternity must be the same to eternity. The humanity of Messiah, in consequence of its union with deity, is made immutable. In the assumption of our nature all mutability was thrown as far from the humanity of Christ as from Deity itself. Humanity, in consequence of transgression, had been removed to an infinite distance from deity. In him we find it brought into the most intimate union with deity.

It is necessary to feel the holiness of God. Holiness is as necessary to God as deity : divest him of holiness and he ceases to exist. We learn here that good and evil do not arise from any arbitrary appointment of deity. The law which is holy, just, and good, flows from the will of God, which is holy, just, and good. The holiness of God is evinced by infinite hatred of evil, and infinite love to the sinner. In the incarnation of Jesus Christ we see the holiness of God written at full length. No one but an infi-

nite being is capable of giving to us correct delineations of God.

God is eternal in his essence, in his law, in his covenant, in his faithfulness. God speaks to sinners by his Son, while he touches their hearts by his Spirit, to ensure attention to what he says.

In the covenant of Father, Son, and Spirit, we behold the love of God to the fallen race of man, shining in all its glory. This love has given infinity and eternity in the gift of the Son, to suffer a hell beyond what devils or fallen man could endure. In the sacrifice of Christ we find every thing necessary to give comfort to a wounded conscience. Let us direct our eyes to it, as that which is calculated to arrest our attention now and for ever.

A mediator must have been provided by God. Man is wholly averse from returning to God. Had the mediator been absolute deity, he must have been infinitely too high for man. Had he been only man, he had been infinitely too low for God ; but here we see him God and man, able to stoop to hell to rescue man from destruction, while he reaches at the same time to heaven, to bring down the blessings that are needful for us in time and eternity. We find extremes meeting in Christ—the highest honour, the lowest degradation—infinite wealth, extreme poverty—the greatest weakness, perfect strength.

We shall err if we confine the value of the death of Christ to his being the surety of his people. It must also be viewed in connexion with the moral government of God. In the sufferings of Jesus Christ, we find all the moral perfections of Deity collected into one focus, and that focus the bosom of a man. When an individual, like ourselves, is under the pressure of severe suffering, we see him forgetting every thing but himself. Suffering contracts the bosom of one that is merely human. But we find that hell itself expanded the bosom of the Saviour with love to God and man.

Whatever evils we find within ourselves, we find a sufficient remedy in the blood of Jesus. A remedy that will eventually enable us to triumph over them all, entirely and for ever.

Are we prizing Jesus Christ every moment? Are we trying to learn this lesson, dependence on an incarnate God? Independence is the spirit of the devil, full of pride. Bring down the monster pride, and you destroy the works of the devil.

Every thing proclaims the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. By him all things consist. He assumes to himself the glory of the divine essence, and receives from his followers divine worship. He is the I AM. No being but one can sustain this glorious name. "I am not," suits all created

being, even in heaven above—it suits all there but ONE.

Justice once took her stand at the bar of truth—her voice immediately flew through heaven, earth, and hell, to cite witnesses to attest the glories of the Son of God.

Infinite and finite being were summoned, and all obeyed.

Angels descend from heaven to proclaim Messiah. “Unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

Devils proclaim Messiah. “What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?”

Enemies as well as friends proclaim him. “I find no fault in him at all,” said Pilate. “Truly,” said the Centurion, “this was the Son of God.”

Ask the water what it thinks of Jesus. It blushes itself into wine in the presence of its God; it changes itself into adamant to form a pathway for the “Most Highest.”

Ask the earth. The grave shakes death into life to sympathize with Jesus.

Ask the Sun. He puts on the robes of mourning for his murdered Lord.

Ask the testimony of God himself—“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Heaven, earth, and hell, once and once only

united in their testimony—They proclaim that Christ is God.

Five things are essential in a mediator.

1st. He must be impartial ; he must treat man with as much justice as God ; he must give to man as much as he gives to God. Christ gives to man not only mercy but justice ; he atones for his sin, and invests him with righteousness.

2dly. A mediator must be chosen by both parties, by God, and by man.

3rdly. He must be master of all the facts of the case ; he must be fully acquainted with them in all their bearings. It is an impossibility that a finite being could be a mediator between God and man ; he must know the law in all its perfection. No one but God could know this.

4thly. He must voluntarily present his services. In one respect, as man, Christ was on a perfect level with ourselves, dependent upon his divine nature for every thing. His having engaged voluntarily to undertake the office of Mediator from all eternity, does not militate against the freedom of his human nature : it was willing, because dependent on his divine nature.

5thly. Both parties must abide by his mediation.

He presents God with all the wealth which God is capable of receiving, and man with all

the wealth which man is capable of receiving. In bringing them into union and communion—in bringing them thus together, God and man are eternally reconciled.

Love and reconciliation must not be confounded. None of the perfections of God could have been reconciled to the salvation of man without the sacrifice of Christ. God is reconciled to us by the sacrifice of Christ; and we are reconciled to God by the sprinkling of his blood upon our conscience. "His own blood." Christ ascended to heaven with his own blood, to cancel the records of heaven against his people. The typical sacrifice was consumed by fire, but Christ, in the sacrifice of himself, consumed the fire of God's wrath. How then can the believer be sufficiently grateful to that God who opened his bosom to receive the hell which we deserved, and thus annihilated it for ever.

Essential life atoned, and how? In the life of one who was man: God is satisfied with this. The perfections of Jehovah are more glorified than if all moral agents had persevered in obedience through the countless ages of eternity. Infinite worth presented itself to the Father in his sufferings. After he had, in atoning for sin, committed his spirit into the hands of the Father, a soldier pierced his side, and there came out blood and water, a fountain opened for sin and

for uncleanness—a fountain of life emanating from essential life. We learn two things from this; that man is not only destined to be washed from his imperfections, but is to live for ever in the life of God. The blood flowed; the life, which consigned itself to the Father in the atonement, consigned itself at the same time to the sinner, to raise him from the death of sin to a life of righteousness, and to raise the body eventually from the dust of death.

That God might visit man in the plenitude of his mercy, one thing was needful—an atonement. One thing was also needful on the part of man. Let us adore the Mediator in his love, wisdom, and justice; for his obedience involved in it justice between both parties, the offending and the offended. What did he do? (May the truth be written on the fleshly tables of our hearts!) He gave himself as a sacrifice to the Father in all his glory, and gave himself to the sinner in the same glory. He gave himself to the sinner, as a Saviour, as fully as he gave himself to the Father as a sacrifice. If we know what sin is, and its evil and desert, we shall enter into the spirit of this truth; if not, we never shall. Essential life in all its glory in the sacrifice; essential life within the bosom of the believer, the spring and source of every principle.

The Saviour is the one thing needful. All

wonders are lost in the sacrifice of Jesus. May we know the infinitely rich comfort of his words, "It is finished." He became essential life in the sacrifice, that he might be the death of death, the destruction of every enemy. I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction! repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." (Hosea xiii. 14.) He has begun the glorious work; he has finished it in part; he has triumphed over death itself; he has triumphed in the souls of many of his family, and he will triumph over it eventually in the souls and bodies of all his people.

One thing will be needful then—a preserver; the Saviour who has delivered will preserve for ever.

The Saviour is exhibited in all his mediatorial glory to all who hear the gospel; none are excluded but those who exclude themselves. There is a covenant to save, but none to exclude; exclusion is the work of man. The covenant of God is ordered in all things, and sure; he will keep his people, and in his holy keeping teach them to keep themselves. To live and die without an interest in the Saviour, is to live and die without any blessing, and the heir of every curse.

The substitution of the Son of God for the sinner is the glory of our religion. The Son of God is essentially free; one finite being could not possibly be a substitute for another: every finite rational being is necessarily accountable to God for himself; he cannot be a substitute for another; a God is necessary. (John x. 17.) "I lay down my life; no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

The sufferings and humiliation of our Lord terminated with his death. (Isa. liii. 9.) "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." Though he was crucified between two thieves, the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea begs the body of Jesus, and lays it in a new tomb prepared for himself. It is observable, that our Lord, after his resurrection, did not appear openly to the Jewish multitude: he was not to be exposed any more to the insult or contumely of his enemies, of those who rejected him. His sacrifice was complete; any further humiliation would have been unjust: it would have been inconsistent with God's moral government that he should have been again subjected to any species of degradation; he therefore appears to his disciples; his intercourse, while he remained on earth, was only among his friends.

Henceforth he was to receive honour as a prince and a Saviour.

In contemplating the sacrifice of Christ, there are three axioms to be observed :

1. God saves exclusively in his sovereignty, that sovereignty involving the glories of his justice.

2. God punishes in absolute justice ; his sovereignty has nothing to do with the punishment of the sinner.

3. Jesus Christ is the only person who was punished in sovereignty, and in justice.

It is an important truth, that the work of the Holy Spirit does not justify ; the atonement alone is the meritorious cause of justification.

“ Take away all iniquity.” This is what God did when he gave up his only begotten Son. He has said to his people, that he will “ cast all their sins behind his back.” Those who would find them must travel far as infinity and eternity before they succeed ; God himself is between the sinner and his sin. Let not the weakest believer despond.

A sinner in all his shame, and a Saviour in all his glory, are exactly adapted to each other.

The subject of the apostle’s ministry was “ the unsearchable riches of Christ ; the riches which God gives are himself, in his Son. We read in maps, “ terra incognita ;” so are the

riches here spoken of. The apostle would meet the most desperate case on this side hell, and obviate every difficulty that can present itself to the mind of a sinner. "I am the most desperate transgressor (one may say) that ever lived; my case is hopeless."—There are unknown regions in the mercies of Christ: come with all your poverty, all your woes, all your sins; his blood "cleanseth from all sin;" and the righteousness which justifies from every charge, is in Jesus. There are also unsearchable riches for sanctification in Christ. Are you distressed? Let the distress be what it may be, the consolation is unsearchable. The religion of Jesus Christ is the religion of a sinner from first to last. By it, the believer is taught never to approach God but by faith in the merits of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This was taught by the sacrifices under the old dispensation; it is the same now, and will be to the last moment of our pilgrimage here. Those who approach God otherwise, are ignorant of him and of themselves.

Christ is the most humble in heaven. That which makes him so is his superior knowledge of finite being; his consciousness of the honour done to his humanity. In Messiah, in the humanity of the Son of God, we see the image of Deity in all its glory. The discipline he under-

went here led him into the inmost recesses of the moral perfections of Deity. The image of God never appeared in created being in all the plenitude of glory as it did in Christ. We are destined to bear it in the midst of our many infirmities here.

The time is at hand when we shall see “the wreck of nature, and the crash of worlds.” Faith in Jesus is the only principle that will triumph at that day—all else will leave the possessor for ever miserable. Have we that principle within us at the present moment? If we have, it will support us under *all* circumstances.

In the last day the essential life of Deity will descend into every crevice of the earth, and every depth of the sea, and bring his children to his presence. No one can be the judge of the quick and the dead but one who is omniscient. Christ is judge of quick and dead; “Lord both of the dead and the living.”

The revelation of God comprises his providence as well as his grace. There is a provision in his providence for little things. We often forget this, and doing so makes them of importance. The provision of God for little things is a balm for that corroding care which is the bane of all true religion.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

When we can do justice to the sovereignty of God, it is seen to be productive of nothing but good. What was the purpose of God from eternity? To show his infinite hatred of sin: and if this were his purpose, how could he ever decree its existence? There was a confusion in my mind on this subject some years ago: the consequences were dreadful. It may be said, that I dwell upon it now too much. I have reason to dwell upon it. He who has been in the jaws of a tiger, will say to others, Beware of tigers.

Without the purpose of God there never would have been a Saviour. Not one of the hosts of angels who stood when others fell, would have been secure in himself. In the light of these truths we should not treat with shyness the purpose of God. The blessings of his covenant are as thoroughly pervaded by justice as by mercy. The apostle Paul proves, in the clearest manner, that salvation, from first to last, is of God.

The most striking instance of the sovereignty of God was the election of Christ. If the doctrine of election be found fault with, we must find fault with the election of Christ more than with any other act of sovereignty. Some limit

their ministry by their own views of the secret decrees of God. Commands as coming from God do not check his own purposes. God is not only a sovereign, but a moral governor. There is a connexion between the blessing and the obedience of the creature. Faith is primarily connected with the blessing; no other grace connects the wealth of Deity and the poverty of the creature.

How is an angel preserved? By the love and power of God not allowing him to destroy himself. Then, say some, those who fell were decreed to fall. No, their fall was of themselves: those who stood were kept from falling by the mercy and power of God.

God hates nothing but sin; gratuitous hatred cannot exist in the essence of deity. This principle removes to infinity and eternity from God an absolute decree of reprobation, and we trace it to its true source.

Gratuitous hatred is found only in the creature—gratuitous love is found exclusively in Deity. In the latter we find election, with all its blessings: in the former we find reprobation, with all its evils. This is explained in the 9th chapter of the Romans: for here we behold sovereign love and partiality laying hold of one of his creatures: Esau subject to strict equity and justice: Jacob selected by divine love, and numbered

among the blessed. There is no one but the infinite, immutable, eternal essence, who is perfectly free from sin and imperfection; and those who would in any manner trace sin to God, are guilty of the utmost absurdity and blasphemy.

Man may pervert justice from a principle of revenge, and often does: he gratifies his own malignity by visiting another with pain. God is essentially holy and just in himself; therefore he is immutably holy and just in all he does. In making a distinction between the justice and holiness of God, we are to consider holiness as the essential nature of God, and his justice as the outward expression of that attribute.

Doctrines in the hands of the Holy Spirit are creators of principles, flowing, as in so many channels, into the preceptive will of God. Purity of doctrine is necessary to call into existence purity of principle, and subsequently and consequently, purity of conduct.

It is high treason to the Almighty to presume to fly back into eternity to inquire whether you are elected or not. You are a sinner, and Jesus is a Saviour to the uttermost. Do justice to these truths, and you will learn the history of your election in the manner in which God intends you to learn it. It was never intended that you should discover it as a speculative truth.

Had not the love of God to fallen man existed

from eternity, it never could have existed at all. We are not to suppose, however, that this love was necessary as his essence; his essence must be infinitely free in all his operations.

The love of God in Christ is so strong, that all the enemies and all the sins of his people shall not be able to separate them from it; but it will separate between them and their sins. Could you trust a love other than that which is eternal and immutable?

The mercy of God in its display glorifies all his other attributes. In the obedience and sufferings of Messiah we behold every perfection of God, unfolding itself in its utmost glory.

Am I asked to prove the existence of light? The sun shines in the firmament. How do I prove every truth in Scripture, every doctrine, every blessing which is to descend from the bosom of a covenant God? Jesus has triumphed; he has ascended up on high, and received gifts for men, even for the rebellious. Again; God delights in mercy: how does he prove it? The benevolent Howard—how did he prove his love to men? He travelled from country to country, from dungeon to dungeon; he did not content himself with saying that he loved them. And how does God prove his love? Has he only told us so? He has sent his Son to die for us; and he sends his Holy Spirit to convince of sin, and

lead to Christ as a Saviour. If we knew ourselves as transgressors, we could not be happy a single moment without knowing *how* God delighteth in mercy.

NECESSITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, &c.

No finite being has the Spirit of God but by the special gift of God. Without the Spirit of God all the glorious hosts of holy angels would soon follow their companions who are now in the depths of hell. If this be true of the pure beings who excel in strength, who is to preserve us, and in such a world as this? The Holy Spirit of God can alone do so. Were any one to show us a spark of fire burning in the midst of the ocean, and tell us, that spark is to consume the ocean, what could make us believe it? Yet such is the case with our hearts if we have received the grace of God in truth: it is as a small spark in the midst of a mighty ocean of corruption; but eventually that spark will consume them all.

Next to the incarnation of the Son of God, the renewal of a dead soul is the greatest miracle.

The attention of the young convert is perpetually directed to something that he has done—some evil that he feels and knows. Notwithstanding this, the language of his heart frequently is, I have

a good heart. Who can teach him that it is a bad one? God alone can do it by his Holy Spirit. In the teaching of the Holy Spirit of God there is that which is infinitely superior to what comes from any other source, be that what it may. No one can teach man but God. We cannot teach one another. God in every sense is the teacher of man. We have nothing to tell each other but what God has originally told us.

No human instruction can reach the heart of man. Under the influence of a selfish principle man carries on war against God. We have many of the elements of the arts and sciences within us, because we are rational beings; but being naturally destitute of spirituality, we stand in need of a new principle of action, which must be the offspring of the Holy Spirit of God. The individual who supposes that he can perceive truth of himself, by his own power, not only proves his own ignorance, but also arrogates to himself a power which belongs only to God. The attempt to comprehend truth irrespective of the Holy Spirit, is to drive men to infidelity or despair. Be earnest, therefore, in praying to God for his Holy Spirit. It is he alone who can give us a taste for spiritual truth, and preserve it alive in us for ever. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." This is true in spiritual as in temporal things. Suppose the sun to be an intelligent

being, and to be asked "In whose light do you discern the distant planets?" The answer must be, "In my own." In whose light do the planets see the sun, and all other objects?—In the light of the sun. So it is with God's light.

The truth of God must be presented to us by the Spirit of truth, who acts, not by revealing any new truth, but by raising up within us a disposition conformable to that of Christ. The Spirit must overshadow man, and call into existence and action a new principle within his bosom.

The lesson which he teaches is the contrast which exists between spiritual good and evil. The natural man may learn any thing but this. It is very difficult to say what a perfect scheme of truth a man may learn without spirituality: a blind man has lectured on optics, and taught them well: so a man may teach truth, and be the means of converting souls, and yet be lost himself.

The proof, and the only proof, of our being taught of God, is our being incapable of living without him. In what does heaven consist? In the consciousness of that contrast which exists between good and evil. It is necessary that the contrast should be kept alive continually. The proof is, when we are incapable of living a single moment without the presence of the Saviour. It is in this comprehensive life of faith that we are taught of God. Be truly wise then, and look into

your bosoms : God is every moment in the heart of his child educating good from evil. To be fully occupied with ourselves is a great blessing. Repose, with unshaken confidence, on the righteousness which justifies. Thus did St. Paul. If taught of God, you are living on the fulness of Christ. This is a delightful and triumphant life. There will be in such a mind an ingenuous sorrow and an ingenuous joy. He will never praise himself : he knows himself too well ; and he is also too much occupied in praising God to be paying any compliments to himself. The blessings involved in this instruction are very valuable : the peace of God in the conscience—love to God and man shed abroad in the heart. Under the influence of this love the Christian succeeds in every thing that is useful. May we be individually kept in the school of Christ !

God teaches by various means :—by his providence ; by the relapses of one into sin ; by the blameless lives of others : but the lesson is the same from all ;—exclusive and delightful dependence upon him for every thing.

Strangers to God, do not listen to the poor trash, that it is not the duty of the impenitent to repent and believe the gospel. If it is not your duty to believe, there is no sin in unbelief. God invites sinners to come and receive every blessing. Perseverance in seeking has always been

crowned with success. No one who has persevered in seeking God, has ever failed to find him. Many have begun, not knowing what they sought; yet God heard their feeble cry. You have every possible encouragement to seek him. Turn not a deaf ear; seek again and again, till you are conscious that you have found him.

Some may know very little: seek to know more. There is something very gratifying in knowledge: and this is the highest knowledge. May he, who alone can instruct the ignorant, visit us now, cover us with his blessing, and fix us at the gate of wisdom, that we may attain knowledge there, and delight to follow him in the example of his life, and in the remembrance of his death, that we may follow him in his ascension to heaven—follow him as he stands our intercessor at the throne of God, and, in the vision of futurity, as he descends from heaven to earth, to take eternal possession of his people.

The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself. Godliness is a blessing of the everlasting covenant. As we find it in the eternal purpose of Deity, we should, without exception, pray for it. The purpose of the Almighty is the strongest encouragement to prayer. God has purposed to save sinners, and to give his Holy Spirit. He has promised to give his Holy Spirit to those who ask him.

We find in nature, that means are connected with ends perpetually. When God has an end in view, we find him employing a golden chain of means to accomplish it. We find it continually in the economy both of nature and of grace. In the former, God may, if he please, work without any means. We see it in the stupendous miracles of the Old Testament as well as of the New. But when God has an end in view in the spiritual world, means must be used. He is determined to save ruined man. But is he determined to save irrespective of a mediator? Assuredly not. Jesus must not only honour the command, but also welcome into his bosom the hell we had deserved. Here are glorious means. See the death of Christ; see the holiness, justice, mercy, and truth of God, indissolubly connected in the end he has in view—the salvation of a world dead in trespasses and sins. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Without faith none can be saved. Fatalism flies at the end regardless of the means; and as often as man does this he will be disappointed of the end. If we do not put out our hand and reach one of the links of the chain, it is from our own wilful inability.

There is a connexion subsisting between what we do every moment here, and the life that is to come.

God will save sinners ; but he will make all those who are saved, instruments in the work of their own salvation.

We shall never be able to do without prayer while in this present life. Some have denied this. See the example of our Lord. Who ever knew the secrets of God as he did ? Who so constant and earnest in prayer ? Those who are most engaged in prayer here, will hereafter be most in praise.

It may seem sometimes that God turns a deaf ear to the believer when he prays, and to the church also : but faith when it is strong will triumph over every thing. Remember the Lord's answer to the woman in the gospel, her reply, and the issue ; " Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Imitate her ; even when God seems to be armed against you, pray to him then. We have not much of the history of this woman ; but we know that she was possessed of the spirit of Jacob : he wrestled with the angel and prevailed.

You cannot expect the blessing of the Lord, while you are neglecting the means of his appointment.

THE BIBLE.

Beware of treating any part of the word of God with unholy familiarity. Beware also of the

opposite extreme—of treating truth with an unholy reserve. Study the Bible. Those who have a taste for this have a taste for the sublime and beautiful, which no one can have correctly who has none for the Bible. We are presented in Scripture with the most valuable of all truth, and in every manner in which it can possibly be brought to the intellect and to the affections: in the greatest sublimity—in the greatest simplicity.

What is chiefly dwelt upon in the Scriptures is that which is of daily, hourly, momentary, use to us in travelling through this world. The history of Jesus Christ is the most interesting thing in the Bible itself; and the close of his life will be the most interesting of all subjects to those who know and love him.

If we were in a right frame of mind, that which is truly spiritual, the truths of the Bible, would so rivet themselves on our hearts that we should think little of any thing else.

The duty is imperative on all to circulate the Scriptures and send forth missionaries. The revelation of God comprises his providence as well as his grace. All that is valuable even in civil society is from the Bible: the restraining of infidel publications is a duty founded on what we owe to each other as well as what we owe to God. The Bible is the parent of every thing valuable on earth. Many are so influenced by it as to

become very amiable members of society. But there is a life beyond the grave, and we must have the Spirit of God to teach us, and fit us for that life.

In the Scriptures we always find actions traced to principles. God never gave any truth to be studied abstractedly ; it was intended to have a practical effect on the heart, the conscience, and the understanding. It is the province of faith to embrace the whole of divine truth, not merely as a history, for so Satan himself receives it ; but to embrace it as a principle to be developed in action. We receive the Bible because it is a revelation which emanates from the Most High ; and were we asked how this is proved, we find in it truths which reach the heart, and follow us wherever we go, in all our thoughts, words, and actions. Every sin which lurks in the human heart, every iniquity which is fostered in that cavern of pollution, is brought to light, and strikingly displayed by the pen and pencil of Jehovah. This is sufficient evidence, were there none other, that the Bible comes from above : and I believe it as fully as I believe that light and heat emanate from the sun.

We should keep two things always in view : first, to know the will of God, and then to be determined in his strength to do it.

THE MORAL LAW—OBEDIENCE—RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The moral law, if traced to its source, must be traced beyond the will of Deity, to his essential perfections. On the supposition of God's calling man into existence as a reasonable being, and consequently of his giving him a rule of action, he could not have given him any other. The sovereignty of God cannot militate against his justice. He gives the law, as it is, in justice to himself, and in justice to his creatures. He gave the law originally in love: had he given any other law, it would have been in hatred to his creatures. This is the only law in obedience to which the creature can find bliss. Obedience to any other law would have involved him in misery. The moral law, then, when traced to its sources, must be traced to the attributes of God and man. Its sources are the perfections of God, and the absolute dependence of the creature on him for ever. The commands and curses of this law are all armed with infinite power against the transgressor; it must do its work; it knows no mercy; it requires perfect obedience every moment from every one—perfect conformity to the will of God. Now we are all under this law without a single exception, and it must and will necessarily crush every one who does not seek and find a refuge

in the bosom of a merciful Saviour. There is no alternative: if it pleased God, we might fight successfully against the laws of nature; if it pleased him, mountains might fall on us without harm: the earth might open and swallow us up, yet we might still live. We might live at the bottom of the ocean. The laws of nature may be changed as God pleases; but mark! the moral law, the law of God, cannot be changed. His sovereignty cannot in the least affect his holy law. Nay, we see his sovereignty engaged in glorifying it to the utmost in the life and death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It follows then, in perfect unison with the testimony of Scripture, that any individual dying without being reconciled to God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, must perish for ever.

The sovereignty of God has nothing to do with the destruction of man. The royal prerogative has nothing to do with the execution of a criminal. The justice of God is not the cause of the destruction of any; the law of the land is not the cause of one single execution. The direct tendency of the law of the land is to prevent the execution. Trace, then, the execution of a criminal to its legitimate source—it must be traced to his own crime. Apply this to the law of God. Divine justice is not the parent of hell; the sin of man is. God is the parent of good, and good

only. Take his justice even in hell, and what is it?—it is his love of what is good. The rays of the sun descending on a dead body, prove the occasion of decomposition ; but the cause of decomposition is not in the sun.

What is called charity is often nothing less than an impeachment of the veracity of the God of truth. The Mahomedan, the Jew, the Socinian, and many of the papists, worship only an imaginary deity. Strictly speaking, there is no scriptural medium between faith in the Messiah and infidelity. If there be any one who is satisfied with merely assenting to the truth of Scripture, he is in a state of condemnation.

Many say, Can we think that the heathen are all ruined? What does Scripture say? Where there is no vision, the people perish. Is it just in God to punish one of his enemies? Is it then just to punish many? View man in a state of savage ignorance—is he a fit companion for God and his angels? Surely this is a monstrous charity, that would drag all such beings to heaven. Peruse man under every advantage, and you find him gathering new strength against his Maker in proportion to his means of instruction. Look at the Jews, they were blessed with the fullest means of instruction ; yet they did but aggravate their condemnation by the abuse of all

the privileges which God put into their hands. Look at their subsequent history ; we see sin developing itself in all its malignity. We never find man complete in sin till we find him with all the revelation that God can impart in his hands. Who was it that opposed our Lord ? who rejected the corner-stone ? The builders ; they who had been employed to build up the church, and had been taught the architecture of heaven. Where, in modern times, have we seen sin exhibiting itself in all its deformity ? In the church of Rome. We see men not content with murdering their own souls, but labouring to murder the souls of others ; desiring to extinguish the lamp of heaven in the temple of God, and kindling instead the flames of hell on earth.

Every one who worships God, must be righteous in some respect or other. God cannot welcome into his presence a single worshipper against whom there is any charge. Angels in heaven worship him in the beauty of holiness. Our first parents in Eden did the same. Being in a state of spotless innocence, they were necessarily at the same time in possession of a perfect righteousness. There was no charge against them ; for they had never been guilty of any sin. Man, on the supposition of his having any religion, must have a righteousness acceptable to God. It is an universal truth, that the wor-

shipper must be first accepted, or his worship can find no admittance to the ear of Jehovah.

A transgressor has no righteousness of his own : no one can have who has once transgressed the law of God ;—that is, no justifying righteousness. It is equally true, that one who has transgressed, can never justify himself by any thing that he does : it is an impossibility. As Luther said, long ago, the doctrine of a justifying righteousness, (as it is appreciated or spurned,) is the criterion of a standing or a falling church. No finite being can furnish man with a righteousness that can justify him in the sight of God : and as there neither is nor can be any medium between what is finite and what is infinite, an infinite person must honour the law which man had violated ; sin must be atoned for ; and that atonement must necessarily involve in it a justifying righteousness. Finite being could never present the transgressor with a righteousness which justifies him ; for this reason :—the curse of God must be as fully honoured as the command. The obedience that works out a justifying righteousness for the transgressor, must necessarily honour the curse as well as the command ; and finite being cannot possibly do this. “ I have seen an end of all perfection,” says the Psalmist ; “ but thy commandment is exceeding broad.” In the light of what I am now dwelling upon, all the

obedience of the angelic hosts would be imperfect and insufficient. Infinity and eternity rise perpetually between it and such a righteousness as is absolutely necessary to justify man from every charge ; so that God looking down on him from heaven, and beholding him as eternally perfect in the righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ, may say, " Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom." This righteousness was wrought out for the transgressor : an innocent being has nothing to do with it ; and never can have. " Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

This righteousness involves in it a remission of all sin. It has been asked, Does it involve the remission of sins that are not committed, as well as of those that are ? To give an easy answer to this question, — Man, when he believes in Jesus Christ, is placed in such circumstances, that he can never sin as he did before he passed from death to life ; and never stands in the presence of God as charged with any sin before him as a judge ; but he stands in his presence as a father. It is true, God has many charges against us individually, as a parent ;

but, as a judge, there is not one in the records of heaven against the believer. The charge is cancelled for ever by the precious blood of the Saviour. Hence the propriety of praying daily that God would forgive our sins, though justified by the righteousness of God.

This righteousness involves in it also peace and reconciliation with God for ever. If a provision had not been made for this in the covenant of the eternal Three, not one son or daughter of Adam would or could have been saved. The sinfulness, wickedness, and imperfection of the creature require every thing that God has provided for us in his holy covenant; and may God of his infinite goodness teach us this important truth. There will then be an end of all bitter disputes about points of doctrines; they will all be felt and valued more highly than the miser esteems his gold, as necessary to keep the soul alive and near to God, and to enable the believer to persevere to the end.

This question arises—Is there such a righteousness for man as excludes the obedience of man? There cannot be: and this exposes the fallacy of justification from eternity. It is true, that man is wholly justified for the sake of what Jesus has done and suffered. Nothing that is right within him by the power of the Holy Spirit forms any part of his justification, and yet it is

equally necessary ; and it is an impossibility for him to be justified irrespectively of his own obedience ; because God is a legislator as well as a sovereign. What, then, is this obedience ? It must be the obedience of faith. And what does faith do ? It believes the truth of God, and receives his blessing. “ With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” This teaches us that faith is the principle that is to take possession of the whole man. If a man give me his heart, I am sure that all else is at my service. Faith is a mighty principle. It is like the main-spring of a watch : it works the whole human machine : there is not a single wheel at work, but through its influence. The fruits of faith have presented the world with all the excellence it has ever witnessed.

The righteousness which justifies, is infinitely removed from, and beyond the reach of, all finite creatures. He who justifies others, must first justify himself ; and we find that in the justification of Messiah, is involved the justification of his church. They are one in a legal point of view. The Holy Spirit invests the church with this costly robe. Messiah fully satisfied divine justice : he obeyed the command, he honoured the curse. The Father has accepted the sacrifice ; and, as God has accepted

his Son's sacrifice, so he accepts every one who believes in it. Will he accept me? I answer, Has he accepted his Son?—for he accepts the weakest believer as he accepted his Son. Do not reject this truth. Satan desires to keep you from receiving it, because it will dethrone sin, and enthrone God in Messiah in the heart. It is necessary to dwell on it. Sin and Satan would soon shake our faith to nothing. He who originally brought truth into the bosom, must keep it alive there perpetually. Truth can be preserved only in him who is essential truth. God inhabits the bosoms of his people, and lives in his own truth in the human heart.

We stand in need of the Spirit, the truth, the blood, and the faith of Christ, to preserve us every moment. The Holy Spirit creates anew, applies the blood, imparts faith, and sustains it, and calls into existence the image of God to live for ever. The perfection of the fountain is equal to that of the sacrifice. Suppose that after Messiah had finished his covenant engagements, and perfected his work, heaven had barred its gates against him;—what injustice would it, not have been! Yet this is what an unbelieving heart does: it bolts and bars itself against that which has satisfied the justice of God and heaven. He is the only sacrifice we stand in need of to satisfy and bless us. When Messiah takes

possession of the heart, he presents himself in all the glory with which he ascended into heaven. He presents the sinner with all that he presented to the Father. Too much! too much! Oh, unbelief! descend to thy native hell, that Jew and Gentile may for ever triumph in the Lord their God.

Finite being could not have approached sinful man in friendship. The command of God to the innocent is, eternally, "Flee from the wicked!" Messiah's approach to sinful man proves his divinity. Why did he approach man? Because he came down from infinite love, armed with divine perfections, to fight our battles for us, and in us, till he presents us perfect, in his own image.

The atonement and the righteousness are inseparably connected; and both emanate from God. It is a divine righteousness, and yet human. Justice required and found full satisfaction from Messiah, and claims acquittal for the believer. These are the truths that enable the believer to fight the battles of the Lord; to return, though beaten, again and again to the field, fighting and crying to the Lord. The strength that was laid up in the covenant for Messiah, is laid up equally for every believer. "In the Lord Jehovah have I righteousness and strength."

The truth of God must be our perpetual

standard. This is the bliss of heaven. Feeling is destined to be brought into perfect unison with divine truth, and to live in it as its element for ever. Had the Saviour himself listened to his own feelings he would have been vanquished; but the truth of God was his rule. May his Spirit lead us to follow his example! God is immutable truth; and immutable truth can alone emanate from him. This involves the safety of the believer in life, in death, and eternity.

ON SIN—ITS ORIGIN—CHARACTER AND EFFECTS—
MAN AS A TRANSGRESSOR, &c.

God cannot by possibility be the author of sin. It is infinitely opposed to his holy nature. He could not predestinate that which is hostile to his own purity. To suppose that God is the author of sin, is the vilest blasphemy; though some in madness and ignorance have presumed to assert it, because they could not solve the difficulties of some truths in revelation. How much better would it have been for them to have hid their faces in the dust, confessing their ignorance!

Sin is the only thing that exists independent of deity.

Sin is the rejection of eternal good, and there-

fore the parent of eternal evil. Think no sin little; the least sin must be the offspring of a nature at enmity with God. The whole of our consolation is to flow from the belief that Christ is a Saviour to the uttermost, and not that our sins are little.

Learn to trace every thing to its right source, and you will possess two keys that will unlock mighty difficulties. Trace *all good*, be it what it may, to God, and *all* imperfection to the creature. Consider the nature of sin as being enmity against God; enmity against him who is infinitely lovely, glorious, and excellent. The natural man has exceedingly crude and imperfect ideas of sin. He may feel it to be an evil as committed against himself or against society; but he cannot, no natural man can, live under a right sense of it, as an evil committed against God.

No creature could have become the enemy of another without first becoming the enemy of God; and then he becomes of necessity the enemy of universal being. Angels fell. They became the enemies of God; and when man was formed, Satan sought his destruction immediately. Man is the enemy of man, and can never become his friend till he becomes the friend of God.

See the awful nature of sin continually seeking the destruction of God as its first object.

How little do we know of its evil! It was but partially developed till God became incarnate; then all the malignity of sin, whether in men or devils, was manifested. Man is not partially defiled: sin has ruined man entirely. Every being who violates the law of God bids an eternal adieu to God. Angels when they left their first estate did so, and Adam when he fell must have done the same but for the salvation revealed. Punishment is born of sin. Sin *necessarily* brings its punishment with it. Sin comprises in itself its own punishment in such a manner, that the destruction of the one involves the destruction of the other.

The justice of God was exemplified in the Son of God when sin was imputed to him.

One thing in the punishment of sin is the eternal exclusion of deity from the soul of the sinner; but the punishment of sin cannot be told either by the inhabitants of heaven or of hell. Look to the sufferings of the Son of God: and in doing so, let us be sure to identify the justice of his sufferings with the justice of the sufferings of those who perish.

The most awful tragedy that ever was or ever will be witnessed, was the crucifixion of the Lord of life and glory. Devils knew him to be their Creator and Judge, that they were nothing in his hands; yet they urged on both Jews and Gen-

tiles to put him to death. See what sin is, sin at its full growth ; and may each of us remember, that we have, at the present moment, the principle within us, which, unless it be pardoned, subdued, and annihilated, will eventually be the same with that of devils. See the madness of sin.

It is an excellent rule to practise what we know. Nothing hardens the heart and stupifies the intellect so much as wilful transgression. Sin possesses the power of concealing its own deformity, and its danger also. Beware of it ; beware of trifling with sin. There is this awful peculiarity in sin, that all become ignorant of its real character, in proportion as they become familiar with it.

Sin never was the solitary act of any finite being. Wherever it evinced itself by a single act, there it proved itself living as a principle. The soul of man in all its powers departs from God continually. The enemies of God will be obliged to study themselves throughout eternity. Their memories will travel back from hell to earth, enter into every thing in which they were ever engaged, and then return laden with the awful burthen to meet him, of whom it is written—"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Oh flee from the wrath to come. The Almighty's court of justice will be

held in the sinner's heart. Many witnesses will be called; two will suffice; the criminal and the judge; and their testimony will minutely correspond. I am not telling you an idle tale. I dare not, at the peril of my soul. No, I throw myself in all the truth of God into your souls, and expostulate with you as beings, who must in a short time be accountable at the bar of God. Sons and daughters of folly, you are engaged in seeking life in death; deliverance in destruction; good in evil; happiness in misery. In Jesus every thing is found; enough to satisfy every desire; to answer every demand; to supply every want.

All men in a natural state, be they learned or libertine, polite or ignorant, high or low, whatever be their individual differences of character, are engaged in two things—shunning God and shunning themselves. Man tells you, in defiance of the testimony of God, that he has a good heart: and yet the society of this good heart is what he cannot endure: the sinner is engaged in flying from himself continually. In eternity all his idols will be taken from him, and the only two beings he is here trying to shun will be for ever present with him—God and himself. God presenting him with a catalogue of his crimes, and his own conscience presenting him with a perfect transcript of them. The impenitent sinner must go to hell, there to be for ever with him—

self and God. Men go on here as if there were no end to this world, setting God at defiance ; but this cannot endure for ever, it must come to an end ; the perfections of God oblige him to bring it to an end.

Who, then, is the honest and the wise man ? He who seeks to know God, and to know himself. How are they to be known and studied ? In the light of God himself. It is wisdom to study God in Christ continually. When we contemplate the infinite perfection of God, it is wonderful that he should ever have loved any thing but himself. He finds all motives to action in himself ; he never loves any being for its own excellency ; if it be not so, we must say that the creature merited something at the hand of God before it was in existence : in other words, that it has that which it did not receive ; and which is the attribute of uncreated existence alone. But men are careless of those things which comprise infinity and eternity. Do not shrink from this bold and interesting truth : God must love the transgressor in the midst of all his transgressions, or his love could never reach his case. This love involves the holiness of Deity more than that which embraces an angel. Then the great truth, that which we have heard again and again, which we are always forgetting in this state of existence, but which will revive, and burn in our souls.

throughout the countless ages of eternity, with far greater glory and brightness than it now does in the bosom of a seraph—is this: “GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.” “God commendeth his love to us in that *while we were yet sinners*, Christ died for us.” The mere statement of this proves not only that it was free love, but love evincing itself in so glorious a manner, that while it embraces Deity, in the glory of all his perfections, it embraces a sinner, in all his vileness. (Ps. xlvi. 4.) A river, whose streams make glad the city of God. It flows from under the throne of God. Once its streams, in their course, bore down from heaven to earth the rock of ages. And what does it now? It washes away the impurities of the city of Zion; and as water always rises to the level of the fountain, so will it rise upwards to its source, exalting transgressors to the throne of God, where they will shine for ever in the righteousness and the image of Jesus Christ.

There is an awful vacuum in the heart of man which must be filled either by God himself in this world, or by the fiery deluge of his wrath for ever in that which is to come. There is an universal indisposition in us, by nature, to love God. We may love some things that are good, we may

love good of an inferior kind ; but all are indisposed to love God ; and yet he is the author and the source of all good.

Next to the incarnation of the Son of God, the renewal of a dead soul to life is the greatest miracle.

Who, but the Infinite, can point out the deceitfulness of the human heart, and the elaborate methods to which man resorts to destroy himself ? We dream that we are possessed of goodness and strength ; but the Lord, who knows us infinitely better than we know ourselves, knew that we were destitute of both. He therefore laid the foundation in him who has infinite merit and infinite power. God cannot hold communion with any human being but as a sinner : in Jesus Christ he holds communion with the sinner, and only as a sinner—as a believer certainly ; but that is, as a sinner, in and through a mediator, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The disposition to depart from God is not found in one individual alone, or confined to a few ; it is common to the whole human race, without a single exception. Peter paid little attention when the Saviour warned him of his danger ; but his safety was here and here only—“ I have prayed for thee.” Had not the everlasting arms been beneath him, he had fallen, like Judas, for ever. We stand in need of the mighty

power of God to preserve us every moment. No being sins from necessity. Satan himself does not.

Rebellion began with man ; the quarrel began by man, and is entirely carried on by man.

The view which some have of sin destroys the very nature of sin altogether. The doctrine of original sin does not comprise any obligation to commit sin. Who does not see that if it did, it would destroy at once the authority of God, and the responsibility of the creature ?

Sin is a turning aside from God ;—in darkness ? No ; in the clearest light.

The destruction of man is wholly and exclusively from himself, as his salvation is from God only.

The most glorious created being is very imperfect compared with the Creator ; he is necessarily imperfect by the law of his being, unless we suppose that God can create God, which is absurd and blasphemous. But this imperfection is innocent ; sin is not necessarily included in it ; yet there is a principle of imperfection in those before the throne at the present moment, which would sink them, did not God prevent. Innocent imperfection would issue in sin, did not God prevent it. It is his mighty power surrounding heaven that preserves heaven. A lesson of profound humility is to be learned from this—to live

every moment in fear and dread of ourselves, and not to trust ourselves in our own hands for a single moment.

He knows little of himself who does not know that there is a principle of evil within him that would lead him away from God. When the believer returns to sin where can he say that he will stop? But for the mercy of God there would be no returning. Would an individual in apostasy ever turn to God? No, assuredly. One wilful sin, even in thought, involves eternal apostasy from God, if he prevent not.

Why is sin the enemy of God; and why is the sinner too his enemy? Because God is infinitely holy, just, and good. Because he is infinite beauty, therefore he is hated. Man quarrels with all the dispensations of God, and with his mercy more than with any thing else.

The covenant of God, rich and glorious as it is, does not comprise a single blessing more than we need. Satan is not poorer than humanity.

General impressions of sin are not enough. Man must be convinced that he is himself a sinner. He must also be convinced of the desert of sin; that it kindles a flame which must burn for ever, unless extinguished *here* by the blood of Jesus. Destitute of spirituality, he stands in need of a new principle of action. Man may see much and know a great deal; but when he discovers

that the knowledge that reaches the heart frightens sin from its throne, he leaves it. Dying under the influence of a corrupt disposition, which pours contempt on divine truth, he will be obliged to read this instruction by the light of hell.

The Emperor Alexander, when in England, ordered a watch to be made which should combine the peculiarities and excellencies of several others. He was informed that if injured, no one in his dominions could repair it. He desired to have it: it was made and sent to Russia: it met with an accident, and was necessarily returned to the maker to be repaired. When Adam was called into existence angels must have beheld him with delightful surprise. But by the attacks of sin and Satan the image of God was lost, the spirituality of the creature was annihilated. Who can repair the human mechanism? He only who first taught the machine to move in his own image, who is acquainted with all the springs and principles of human action. Pretenders have tried again and again, but to no purpose. When we open the volume of inspiration we behold the machine once more in the hands of the maker. He can repair it; and not only so: it will be so improved by him as eventually to comprise many glories to which angels must be strangers for ever. Are we individually

in the hands of God? Nothing less than the consciousness of this can give us solid peace in time—how much more in eternity.

We are less disposed to be acquainted with ourselves than with any thing else. All are disposed to usurp the natural 'perfections of God, and hate, despise, and trample under foot his moral perfections.

When we consider the insensibility of man to divine things, we are presented with a most awful spectacle. That man, the offspring of Deity, and dependent on him every moment, should be indisposed to think of him, were of itself a sufficient charge. But when you add to this, positive transgression, when he proves by one evil action after another, that he hates God, because he is just, and more because he is merciful; here is gratuitous hatred—hatred which the devil cannot evince.

Hate sin above all things; this will be the best proof that you love God. You will be armed with the image of Deity, to fight against and triumph over every enemy. Though renewed, you are renewed but in part. Every principle of evil inhabits your bosom. Pray to God to keep them all down. Satan is ever ready to seduce you, and if left to yourselves, there is enough in your own hearts to ensnare and ruin you. Satan and the sinner resemble two lovers laying snare

for each other. If this be your state, it is most awful. The day of your union is approaching, your nuptials will be celebrated in hell. The contract will not be for better or for worse, but for the worst that can possibly happen, and that for eternity.

In the light of these truths bless the grace which has made any of you to differ. Invite God to carry on his own work to perfection, and he will do it. Be not silent before him; pray till you are heard—till you are answered—till you are in the dust, with no other desire than to glorify God; and he will assuredly glorify you.

I would earnestly warn the thoughtless. If you continue unchanged you will soon find yourselves in hell. Your cup will be one of peculiar bitterness. You will be conscious that you have wilfully closed your ears against God. Lift up your hearts for that instruction of the Holy Spirit, which is necessary to admit the Redeemer into your heart, and enthrone him there.

There are some who endeavour to unite the practice of vice and the profession of religion. If any here are living in sin, under the cloak of religion, I conjure them to have mercy on themselves. Return, ye doubled-minded. Why will ye endeavour to join sin and religion; it is impossible. In any case there is only one way of

returning to God. By repentance toward him, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

In returning to God, the question is not the degree of delinquency on our part. The worst are encouraged to return.

Those who know God most intimately, know that they need to return to him continually.

Sin must die, or the soul must die. Hell has all its fountains in the sin of man.

Justice requires that in hell sin should produce all its effects on those who delighted in it on earth—the seduced and the seducer reproaching each other for ever. But millions of our fellow-creatures live as if eternity were long since dead, and had bequeathed its rich legacy to time.

Sin has contracted the human heart. The grace of God will enlarge it, and we shall love each other in heaven in proportion as we love the Saviour. Justice requires that we should know each other in heaven.

Sin is like the spider ; it extracts poison from every thing.

There are many in hell, at the present moment, who are making application to themselves of the sermons they heard on earth.

There is nothing more disgusting than to hear an individual talking about the most sublime truths, while we are aware that he knows, and cares nothing about them.

There are those who reproach ministers for giving faithful warning of their danger to sinners—"as if we were all to go to hell!" Every creature but man needs to be driven to destruction; all require to be goaded on, man only excepted, who goes to it in spite of every warning, every entreaty.

The perfections of God banish the transgressor to an infinite distance from him; but beside this, his own transgressions banish him equally far. God's justice does not banish man one hair's breadth farther from him than he banishes himself. Oh that men would think! Sin is the necessary parent of condemnation.

It is said by some, that the sufferings of the wicked are only temporary, not eternal. The sufferings of Jesus Christ prove the contrary. Hell is a bottomless pit. The enemies of God are sinking, and will be for ever sinking in it, but never reaching the bottom.

Thousands who lived under a dispensation of mercy are at this moment in hell; and this truth lives in their consciences, that it is their own fault that they are not in heaven. "Who made thee to differ?" must for ever be the motto of those who have known the grace of God in Christ.

Society has charms everywhere but in hell. There is one thing pure in hell—that is the justice of God. The voice of God will follow those

who perish to all eternity, still calling to them, "Love me! serve me!" but the answer echoed back from every bosom will for ever be, "Depart from us—we will not have thee to reign over us."

All finite being is in some respect or other related to God. There must be a relationship subsisting between God and a particle of matter, or that particle could not exist. As we ascend in the scale of being, new wonders present themselves to our view perpetually, till we arrive in the presence of those angels who have never violated the law of their Creator. They are related to him in many respects. But to find every relationship that can possibly subsist between the Creator and the creature, we must find man in the ruins of the fall, and see him raised to newness of life. Is it not surprising that the highest honours should have been reserved for those who have fallen into the lowest state of degradation? For man has fallen lower than the angels. Man in the fall became the vassal of a vassal—the slave of a slave. Man in the ruins of the fall subjected matter as well as spirit to the influence and dominion of sin. There is something so awful in the fall of humanity that it baffles description. But hear me, thoughtless sinners. From the wreck of humanity God has purposed from eternity to raise man to a new state of glory; that glory in-

volving in it every thing God himself could confer upon them. If a vessel in an action were blown up, in consequence of its magazine taking fire; and if some one were to say, the fragments of that vessel are to be re-collected, the vessel is yet destined to be victorious, who would believe him? My brethren, sin sprang a mine in Eden, it cast man to the distance of infinity and eternity from God, and at the same time introduced a schism in the human bosom; so that we are far removed from each other, while each in himself is broken to atoms: there is nothing whole, nothing connected, in any of us. Our mental powers are at war with each other—all separated and scattered. The intellect says one thing, the heart another. Conscience reproveth—we rebel immediately against it. See the fragments of humanity. But admire the glory of our God. He collects together these scattered fragments, and by his divine skill constructs with them a vessel that is destined to carry death and destruction into the lines of the enemy. Yes; man raised from the ruins of the fall is destined even here below to achieve greater wonders than angels. He is raised by God himself, and taught by him to fight successfully against the world, the flesh, and the devil. But in whom, and in what? In him who is a Redeemer, Mediator, Surety, Husband, Bro-

ther, Prophet, Priest, and King: in Jesus Christ, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. Here are wonders.

Man, with all his sins and calamities, is invited to receive rest. Is there any rest to be found in sin? There are those who pretend to laugh at the idea of heaven and hell, particularly in the presence of persons, who, the infidel is aware, are not skilled in controversy. A proper question to be asked of such unbelievers is, Have you never found a hell within your own bosom? The question could not be answered in the negative without a falsehood; and if indeed there be any peace in such a heart, it is a false peace, the effect of the conscience being seared with a hot iron. There is nothing like rest to be found in the natural man. The speculative man wanders from object to object, and is never satisfied. Without God, man even in this world only wanders from pain to pain, from misery to misery, from hell to hell. In the bosom of God alone is rest to be found. There only did Adam in innocence find it. On the wings of love his soul ascended to his God, seeking and finding in him peace and bliss, and enjoying the creature in a secondary degree, and as a varied medium to show forth his glory.

Sin is the parent of all uneasiness, and of the numberless miseries which oppress mankind.

Without the pardon of sin, it is impossible for God to give rest.

The gospel challenges the sublimest intellect, and will gratify it fully. Science and literature cannot do this. When I find the apostle exclaiming with a holy enthusiasm, "I am determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," I am inclined to think that more is implied than the words express. That, although all necessary truths are clearly revealed, yet in following up the knowledge of him we shall be sweetly led into delightful consequences : beholding the attributes of Deity, eternally harmonizing in our nature, brought into a focus in a bosom human as our own, forming a new sun which angels never before beheld—the life and soul of universal being—the perfections of Deity wafted to us through all the graces of humanity. Here is a subject of contemplation, surpassing the highest flights of science.

That the Greek philosophers were dissatisfied with the knowledge they possessed, appears clearly from their own writings. The gospel affords rest both to the intellect and the affections ; and man does injustice to both in transferring them to any creature. The peace of God in the conscience, and the love of God in the heart, are alone satisfying, and afford a happiness which is to be found nowhere else. They

are the consequence of the comprehensive manner in which the Lord bore our sins. A shaft must have reached his heart from every sin and misery of ours, that eventually consolation and peace might reach the deepest distress which may inhabit any bosom, arising from the sum of all the evil that can be found on this side eternity.

In casting our sins upon Jesus, we learn the happy art of transferring likewise every other calamity. He has covenanted to bear all the burthens of his people ; and we dishonour him more than ever by not welcoming his invitation. To ensure peace and serenity, we must delight in his ways, and acquiesce in his dispensations. May we listen to, and obey his invitation, that we may find rest to our souls.

ON REGENERATION.

The necessity of a new birth is plainly taught both in the Old and New Testaments. The believer needs not to be told that it is requisite. Without being born of God, it is impossible for any individual to be holy, and of course equally impossible for him to be happy ; for it is not in the power of Deity to make an unholy being happy.

The happiness of God, in a great measure, involves itself in his holiness. When he makes happy, he must first make holy. His own image must live in the bosom of the creature.

We are here on earth in the university of the King of heaven. Here the family of heaven are taught and graduated, and made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

True religion consists in this: First of all, a new principle. This new principle gives new habits—a new principle and new habits to fight against the old principle and old habits, and to triumph over them. Cultivate habits of good in yourselves and in your brethren. Remember that we are, in an eminent degree, the creatures of habit; we act daily more from habit than principle: hence the necessity of thinking, of reflecting, till divine truth takes full possession of us, and consecrates us wholly to the service of the living God.

The doctrine of the new birth is of the first and of the last importance. The Saviour of mankind, in his conversation with Nicodemus, enters upon it immediately.

The promise to the Jews of old (a promise in which every individual Christian is interested) is this: “I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.” (Ezek. xxxvii. 21.)

That, comparatively speaking, is a small blessing; the richest is behind. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you."

True religion emanates from the bosom of God, in all the glories of his own perfections, to the bosom of those who are naturally and wilfully the slaves of sin and Satan.

2ndly. A new heart must necessarily have new tendencies. A new heart has a new object. God, who evinces as much wisdom as mercy in all his dispensations, presents to the new heart of his own creation the only object that can satisfy it, namely, himself. Nothing less will do. As the magnet attracts the steel to itself, so does the God of mercy attract his child to himself, and in himself to every thing that is good—to every thing that is lovely and well-pleasing to him. The apostle Paul, in a few words, gives us the whole of true religion. "The love of Christ constraineth us;" (2 Cor. v. 14;) evidently meaning that he himself kept always in view the dying love and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The word which the apostle uses in designating the effects of the love of God, "constraineth," is strikingly emphatical. It was intended to give us the highest idea of what it could achieve. Nothing has achieved any thing in this world like the love of Christ; every thing else compared with this retires to an immeasurable distance.

Fix your eyes on a ship without sails, surrounded by mud, with no water: this gives us only a faint emblem of man by nature. Look at the same ship in the strongest current of the river, while the wind is filling her sails. Two mighty elements are wafting her from port into the ocean. There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God: into its current the believer's bark is wafted by God himself, while the breath of God fills his sails, and will shortly waft him safely into the haven of heavenly rest.

"The love of Christ constraineth us!" We should envy none, while we look around us, and see millions travelling to eternity as regardless of God and of their immortal souls, as if they were creatures destined only to return to their native element the earth.

3rdly. The believer adopts a new rule of action: the rule he has naturally is a very bad one. We all make rules for ourselves. Many systems

have been devised by man, and their authors tell us confidently and impudently that they will save man. Oh no; the greatest work of God is to save; there is an absolute necessity of being found wholly in God, in the righteousness and in the image of Jesus Christ.

Whatever rules a natural man lays down, he violates them; so that, were it possible for God to tell him, "Choose your own system, be faithful to it, and you will be saved;" even then he would be lost. The rule which God has given is a perfect rule—it leads to perfection. The whole revealed will of God, involving itself in the obedience of faith, is the believer's rule: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature; and as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." (Gal. vi. 16.)

The believer chooses, and chooses with delight too, the rule which God himself has pointed out. Though it must be the highest wisdom to keep perfection perpetually in view, it is equally true that the religion of a believer, while here below, is the religion of an imperfect being. Every thing, both in the Old and New Testament, tells us this. The daily sacrifices of the Jews, the great sacrifice on the anniversary of their atonement, types and shadows, as well as the express

declarations of the New Testament, unite their testimony in presenting us with the most interesting truth we can possibly learn ; that the religion of Jesus Christ is the religion of an imperfect being, of one not always faithful to his own principles.

Do not quarrel with the present dispensation, there is in it as much wisdom as love. Sin is evidently suffered to live to humble the believer, and to give him the most humiliating views of himself, and necessarily connected with this, to enhance the divine perfections, and to endear God in them for ever.

4thly. The believer has a new end in view.

There was a time when self was chief, self was the first thing he had in view. But, now it is the glory of God ; and, certainly, the glory of God was intended to involve self-love in it in its highest and best sense. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." God would have us take care of ourselves and of our health, for his glory, that we may serve him. Now the intemperate do not eat and drink for God, but for themselves ; their conduct, unless repented of, and forgiven, must necessarily meet with punishment, and end in woe.

The connexion between sin and misery has nothing in it of an arbitrary kind. It flows from the very nature of things. It is so necessary

that God himself cannot dissolve it. This is clearly proved in the death and sufferings of the Son of God, where we find every truth presented to us in all the dimensions of Deity.

The believer has likewise new feelings. We all have feelings, and must have them. Properly speaking, hardness of heart does not rob us of our feelings. A man, however hardened, has yet feelings exquisitely acute. Touch the man himself, his honour, as he calls it, and you will soon see that he has feelings, though they are such only as to arm him with death and destruction.

New love, new hatred, always have new friends and new objects. "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." New light in the intellect, new fire in the affections, a new bias in the will. It is like the leaven which the woman put into the three measures of meal; it will ferment and work till the whole is eventually leavened, fit food for God himself.

In giving ourselves to the Lord, we give ourselves to each other. It cannot be otherwise. We read of those who devoted themselves to the service of the Lord in the first ages of Christianity: they first gave themselves to God, and then to each other.

The friendship of one who really and truly loves God is very valuable; next to the friendship of God himself, it is the most precious of all

treasures. We find a very interesting contrast exemplifying this in the conduct of Ruth and Orpah. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and returned to her native land. Now hear Naomi addressing Ruth: "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law." (Ruth i. 15.) It appears that Naomi knew Ruth well, she was only trying her principles—only endeavouring to get the rich secret from her—and she succeeded too, for "Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." That we love the brethren, is an indubitable proof of divine grace; it is referred to in Scripture as one of the symptoms of the grace of God.

ON CONSCIENCE.

The state of man was such, as to require the blood of an incarnate God to save him! How opposite is this truth to the assertion, continually sounded in our ears, that if a man acts conscientiously according to his opinions, whatever they

may be, all shall be well with him. This delusion ought to be opposed: if it were admitted to be correct, civil society would be in danger of being overthrown; for if an individual should do what was pernicious, conscientiously, he could not, on such a principle, be charged with crime. The fact is, that multitudes have gone on sinning with a high hand against God and their fellow-creatures, while they acted conscientiously. Of this St. Paul was a remarkable instance; and our Lord said, that those who would put his disciples to death should think they did God service. Nor is it to be doubted that the Papists, at least most of them, thought they were serving God by persecuting the Protestants. This diseased state of conscience is implied in the text —“Purge your conscience from dead works.”

Conscience is the last faculty of the mind that surrenders itself to sin, and the first that returns to God. It is a wonderful faculty: dark and blinded as it is, in a state of nature, the Lord makes a remarkable use of it even in those who are strangers to him.

But it may be asked, how can conscience, the monitor of the soul, be in such a state of blindness? The answer is, it is blinded in consequence of a wilful rejection of the truth of God. Great criminals have occasionally furnished the world with memoirs of themselves, which are very in-

teresting to the student of human nature : these show how they have gone on from one sin to another, until they have lost sight of the difference between good and evil : they rejected God, and every thing that came from God ; while, at the same time, every new sin blinded the conscience more and more. When pure truth is presented to the mind of a natural man, it is opposed and rejected, notwithstanding the vigorous remonstrances of conscience ; if again presented, it is again rejected ; and the process is repeated until the conscience becomes gradually seared. Now, when a man has brought himself into this state, wilfully resisted the truth of God, and extinguished the light which should regulate his conscience ;—in this state of man, are we to listen to persons who would make excuses for those who are engaged in every evil against God and man, on the plea of acting according to conscience ? Away, then, with this error.

A conscience, to be pure, must first of all receive a *pure and perfect rule*, the rule of God ; and must be so inspired by the Holy Spirit as to yield obedience to it. Natural conscience is blind to the *magnitude of transgression* ; it tells us nothing of it. Sin is hostility to God in the first place. Conscience does not make us sensible of this. It reproves man for exposing himself to the evil consequences of sin ; but it has nothing

of that ingenuousness which embraces the law of God. The conscience of the most amiable natural man on earth excludes God entirely, and banishes him to a distance. Great is our need of an enlightened conscience, to tell us what is due to God and to each other.

Natural conscience says nothing of the *prevalence of sin* in the human soul; of the universality of its dominion. Sin has not taken *partial* possession of the human bosom; the spiritual image of God is totally annihilated. Ask, however, any natural man what he thinks of himself? Why, he thinks he has a very good, honest heart, while the Scripture testimony is, that it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Is such a conscience to be trusted, whose testimony is in direct opposition to that of the God of truth? If the *guide* of man be in such a state, what must be the man's situation? Were you at sea in a storm, what would you think of the helmsman, if you observed him steering the ship directly upon the rocks: would you not reckon it high time to remove him from his post, or, at any rate, convince him of his error, and set him right? Poor, foolish man! Our state by nature is so awful, that, whether we act conscientiously or not, we travel the broad road leading to destruction. Mistake me not. When the Scriptures are in a man's hands, and the gospel

faithfully declared, conscience must and will remonstrate very powerfully ; but if its dictates be disregarded, its energy and elasticity are speedily lost.

The *desert of sin* is not declared to us by natural conscience. Sin rejects an infinite good in excluding and banishing God ; the punishment corresponds—the loss of an infinite good, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Some say, the banishment will be only for a time : why, the cause will still live. A person brings sickness upon himself by intemperance ; the physician tells him, “ If you would be in health, you must become abstemious ;” however, the man goes on in his indulgences, and consequently his illness gains new strength every hour. Thus will it be with the enemies of God, who persevere in rejecting him. It is useful to review these truths ; to see afresh the extensive love of God towards us, who are wilfully bent on rebellion against conscience, even when it is right.

But in Christ we have a perfect remedy : a Spirit to convince of sin, which echoes the truth of God, and recognizes the law to be holy, just, and good. It is necessary to know and feel the condemnation dealt out by the law of God, that we may learn to value and prize that blood which purges the conscience ; which not only satisfies

but glorifies to the uttermost, all the perfections of God. Tremendous flashes of lightning may illumine the gloom of that night which prevails in the sinner's soul, while he is still determined to pursue his mad career; but a pure conscience is like the light of the sun; it does justice to the law and to the gospel of God; the condemnation of the former, and the justification of the latter, receiving the testimony that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. It convinces of the evil of sin, of our own real character, and also of the evil of unbelief; that the sacrifice is of infinite worth, and that all are welcome to it,—Christ died not for his people only, but for the whole world, as a medium of moral government: none are excluded from the benefit of his work, but those who disobey the command to repent and believe in him. Do you know a guilty conscience, which says, I have violated the law, I am undone? Do justice to the blood of Christ. Who has convinced you that you are a sinner? The Holy Ghost. Can you suppose that he is less a friend to truth as it regards Jesus than as it regards the law? Can God be true to his law, and false to his gospel? An enlightened conscience will present us with *all* the truths of God as they come from him, in all their glorious magnitude. The same Spirit through which Jesus atoned for sin, brings down the

blessing to the heart. Under his influence the conscience may be made wonderfully pure and perfect here below, ascending from the grave of spiritual death to the life of righteousness. Do we know what it is to triumph through faith over every charge, and find a perfect acquittal? A good conscience echoes the truth of God, condemns as he condemns, and acquits as he acquits; receives all that he has revealed, and makes the best use of it.

A good conscience is kept pure by faith in the atoning blood of Christ. It has been foolishly held by some, that they were justified from eternity; were saints before they were sinners. Now, there is a manifest absurdity in supposing that we could be justified before we had begun to exist; but, besides this, God does not justify simply as a sovereign; he justifies as a moral governor also: therefore the blessing must be connected with the obedience of faith. As a sovereign, he cast all the sins of his people into the depths of the sea; but, that he may be honoured as a moral governor, it is necessary that the blessing should reach the soul by faith, and be felt and realized in the heart and conscience.

An enlightened conscience will do justice to the blood of Jesus, though it may be long in learning the invaluable secret. The believer, wearied and harassed by one difficulty after another, begins to see the vast importance of an in-

finitely glorious sacrifice, in which he may approach God, at all times. Are you distressed by sin, and willing to be delivered from it in God's own appointed way? Why then, the path is as straight as an arrow? But if you are indulging in any thing wrong, then it is no wonder that you are in clouds and darkness, and that the rod follows you day after day. Pray God to give you an honest heart, disposed to devote yourself to him. When this is realized, there will be, every moment, a conflict within; for sin will blend itself with all we do. Let us look to the sacrifice, to have our wounds healed. In this way we are led on, day after day; taught to trust entirely in Jesus, to be truly grateful to God, to be conscientious in discharging every duty, and to be more ambitious that our lives should be regulated by that love to God and love to man, which is the perfection of the gospel, and of the law, as comprised in the gospel.

Terror is not necessarily attendant on conviction. There may be terror, and yet no conviction. There may be true conviction, and yet no terror. Conviction sinks most deeply into the mind, when it is calm, and able to survey truth comprehensively. Wherever the deepest conviction of sin is, there is the best foundation for true religion.

Conviction of sin is not to live in the heart for a day, a month, or a year; but, as long as the believer lives: it is necessary that it should be so. He who knows his own heart, knows that sin is even now so strong within him, that the hand of Omnipotence alone can subdue it.

The intellect is the channel by which truth enters into, and dwells in the heart. It is when the intellect is calm, and enlightened by the Spirit of God, that conviction is deep. Convictions must, if smothered, rise again. They are buried alive, and will and must have a resurrection. True conviction drives to Christ, and gives the sinner no rest till the peace of God is established in the conscience. There is no grave for sin, but in the bosom of Immanuel: there it dies eternally.

MORAL INABILITY.

“When we were *without strength*, in due time Christ died for *the ungodly*.” In the strength of man’s “cannot” lies his guilt; and instead of serving him with the shadow of an excuse before the throne of God, it will only aggravate his guilt for ever.

Naturally, men are disposed to quarrel with

the Almighty instead of themselves. If I cannot come without being drawn of God, say some, the fault is not mine. Now, hear what the Saviour says:—"Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Man's 'cannot' and 'will not,' are synonymous. We never make such mistakes in the common concerns of life as we do in things of everlasting importance. For instance: some individuals are so addicted to theft, that they cannot avoid stealing as often as opportunity presents itself; they are thieves in principle; they delight in theft, though they get nothing by it; yes, and even when they only injure themselves by it. Now, begin by preparing an apology for *them!*

"Without me ye can do nothing." Here are the Saviour's glories. He evidently teaches us that we are absolutely dependent on him for every thing. All our natural faculties live in him: he has called them into existence: he preserves them in existence. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." But when he says to those who are the mystical members of his body, that without him they can do nothing, it is evident that they subsist in him in a still higher and more glorious sense than others. The devils live, and move, and have their being in him, at the present moment: all their faculties are exercised in his energy; but the abuse of

those faculties is their own exclusively. The will of the devil (as far as physical power is concerned) is exercised in the strength of God at the present moment ; but the abuse of it, the moral depravity which inhabits it, flows exclusively from himself. This truth is absolutely necessary to solve many difficulties. There must be two things in the action of every moral agent—a principle, moral or immoral, good or evil, and physical power. The arm that is raised to strike a brother dead, is wielded in the strength of God ; but the moral depravity of the action is the creature's exclusively.

In tracing religion to first principles, we find that it unites necessity, in the highest degree, with the highest degree of freedom.

Every reasonable being must be a responsible being, and responsibility will ever rise with the means of instruction.

No blessing which is conferred on any moral agent can ever set aside the authority of God.

The Lord excludes from salvation none who hear his truth but those only who exclude themselves. What bar or difficulty, what obstacle is there between you and God? That obstacle, whatever it be, is entirely of your own creating.

God will establish a throne of judgment in the hearts of all his enemies for ever. God himself will occupy it—that God who is a consuming fire.

The voice of God calls on every moral agent to worship him.

It is absolutely requisite for us to attend to the necessity of the accountableness of every moral agent, that we may be defended from the errors of the present day.

Wherever we find the command of God, that command considered in itself is pure and benign. That the law of God is sanctioned with a curse, is so far from being in opposition to this statement, that it only proves the purity and benignity of the lawgiver. If the transgressor of the law of God were not visited with a curse, the consequences would be most awful; so awful, that I check myself lest any thing apparently irreverent should escape my lips. If the law were to relax in its demands, it would be unjust to God and cruel to man.

There is a loveliness in the law even when read by the light of the flames of hell.

The Lord does not trifle with men in the declarations of his word, and he will not eventually allow men to trifle with him.

It is inconsistent with the perfections of God to address moral beings otherwise than as accountable beings, whether in his law or in his gospel.

The inability of man, strengthened to its

utmost pitch, only proves the strength of his wickedness and depravity.

That which constitutes the responsibility of man is the faculty of reason, and a correct rule of conduct.

While it is certain that God alone can preserve the creature, it is equally true that nothing but what is in the creature himself can prompt him to desert God.

The invitation is addressed to all mankind, without any restriction: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." There is not a single human being on earth who is not heavy laden, whether he be conscious of it or not. We are not aware that we are so, or of the cause of our unhappiness, until the Spirit visits our minds, convinces us of sin, and urges us to flee from the wrath to come. This is a painful operation to flesh and blood, but it is necessary and salutary, just as it is an act of humanity to awaken the inmates of a house on fire, although the alarm may occasion a shock to their feelings. Salvation is a universal remedy, freely proffered to all; the disciples were instructed to preach the gospel to every creature; and did it not bring the blessing within our reach, the invitation would contain a double insult—to God, and to the transgressor. The invitation is much

more than "a declaration of the divine will:" when God invites, he commands, and he can never command a moral agent to do any thing that is unjust, or unreasonable, or (strictly speaking) impossible. God can never address man as other than an accountable agent, and the obligation to obey is as universal as the invitation. If accountability were not commensurate with the invitation, there would be no such thing as impenitence and unbelief. And what is the source of unbelief—of that apathy with which the offer is received? Unfold the coverings of the heart, and it will be found in some favourite propensity, some darling passion, which the unbeliever is determined to gratify, and for which he barter heaven away. This is our natural character.

In the religion of him who knows God most intimately, there are three things, no one of which exists without the others. Filial confidence, filial reverence, filial obedience.

To delight in God is the necessary perfection of true religion; not only here, it must be so for ever. True wisdom consists in delighting in God; indeed, delight in any thing else is awful delusion. Did we delight fully in God, we should find our delight in every thing else, because of finding God in it. Believers would love one

another, because of his image in them, and he the eternal life of that image. And they should remember, in this world, that they are not to be strangers in heaven.

Does our profession of religion lead us to delight in God? Are we thoroughly convinced that there is nothing but misery in delighting in any thing else? Every thing, in the countless worlds which he has made, will minister in some way or other to the comfort and happiness of him who delights in God.

Lift up thy face before him. Timidity is the offspring of guilt. Angels are bold in the presence of God, because they are innocent: humble, because conscious that it is he who preserves them in innocence.

Will you bring your sins to Christ for pardon, and at the same time plunge a dagger in the bosom of every beloved lust? *This* is the spirit of a martyr. It is not alone the enduring of persecution that proves the reality of the religion in any individual. Fighting against sin is the best proof of its reality.

One secret in the believer's life is, that he approaches God continually in all the wealth of God. There is no one able to approach him in his own wealth.

Look inward to see the evil of sin; outward, to see the remedy provided.

Godliness is synonymous with the image of God. There is a sense in which all are created in the image of God, as rational beings. The human intellect is a faint image of Deity; but spirituality is far more glorious. Spirituality—godliness—the image of God, raises a man far more above the human intellect than the human intellect raises him above the brute. It is awful to look on only one individual destitute of the image of God; but, alas! we see the greater part of our fellow-creatures led almost blindfold by their own sinful propensities, to everlasting ruin. It is this spiritual image that is the most glorious work of God. It is the same wherever found, whether we hold converse with the angelic hosts, or peruse, in the volume of inspiration, the history of Adam in Eden, or of man, restored by grace. It is essentially the same: there are different degrees of glory in it. The saints in heaven are more conversant with God than angels are: they know him better in consequence of having experienced the salvation of God.

As we are the children of mercy, so God intended that we should be the parents of mercy.

Do you delight in the mercy of God? "He delighteth in mercy," is all that can be said of God: it implies all the glories of all his moral perfections. Nothing more can be said of man—nothing more of the humanity of the Son of God

in heaven. Who most resembles God on earth? He who most delights in mercy. This is at once the most delightful and the most scrutinizing test of true religion.

If you delight in mercy *you hate sin*. Those who pretend to delight in the mercy of God and live in sin are liars. He who delights in mercy delights in every thing that is like God. He is a pensioner on the mercy of Jehovah every moment.

Who is the godly man? He who is so in every thing. Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect unto *all* thy commandments. Be men of God everywhere—in public as well as in private. The subjects of sin and Satan wear the livery of hell publicly. It is the will of God that his family should wear publicly the uniform of heaven. Engage in nothing without God. God intended that his holy religion should fill and pervade every thing with which you are connected. The business of one, and the profession of another, are only excuses in the hearts of sinners, which will be of no avail in the last day. Having something to do, was intended by God to aid true religion. A profession should be the handmaid of religion. The human intellect sees nothing aright, unless under the influence of true religion. If men of God, you are fit for every thing.

Godliness is a blessing of the everlasting covenant. The image of Deity is a blessing provided in the covenant of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, infinite ages before the birth of time. It is as necessary for man as the righteousness of Christ. God cannot confer one without the other : prize them both equally : view them as distinct blessings, yet necessarily united to each other. Both of them cost the Son of God his own life.

What is the value of every good thought God has bestowed upon any of us ? Who can calculate it ? Jesus died to purchase it.

The promise is not against the command : the promise was given to endear the command ; and both are connected.

Bear these things in mind, and you will be as far removed from legality as from licentiousness. You will see the narrow path which the vulture's eye has never beheld, but which was marked out by the footsteps of Deity when he travelled through this world in our humanity, atoning for our sins, and leaving us an example that we should follow his steps. There is not enough in finite being to satisfy the human intellect. They deceive themselves who imagine that they are to be satisfied for ever in scientific pursuits. They are burying God in their studies. That is poor knowledge which banishes God from the human heart to a greater distance than before.

Seek, first, the knowledge of God as necessary to enable you duly to appreciate every other knowledge. "To know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent—THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL." It is in his Son, under the influence of his Holy Spirit, that he must be known. We are destined to know and love God for ever. The perfections of Deity will flow into the eye of the intellect in one eternal tide. We shall have wonderful conceptions of his love, of his mercy, of his truth, of his justice. He has provided the means of living in communion with his family here on earth, in his Son. Seek and find him daily, and you will be prepared for every good and every evil which can ensue. Remember the high honour conferred on you—set apart for himself. This has no tendency to excite pride. This truth is the child and nurse of humility. Consider obedience in a two-fold point of view: as due from you to God, and as a blessing provided in the covenant of God for you. Seek and find it as a blessing, and you will delight in the conscious possession of it. And let those who are conscious that they wear the image of Deity, whose honest desire it is to glorify God, avoid even the appearance of evil. Shun the most distant path that may lead to temptation. Make good use of your own experience. Study the word of God. He who

is upright before God, must be lovely before man. He who loves God, necessarily loves his fellow-creatures.

HUMILITY.

Humility is the crown of finite beings, a crown which monarchs seldom wear, though made and jewelled by the hand of God himself. Humility appears in all its glory in Christ; it shines in the humanity of the Son, and will continue to shine there for ever. All who surround him in heaven are very humble, worshipping at the feet of the Lamb. True humility brings an individual to the dust, and keeps him there. It manifests its celestial origin in its effects. The man's desire is to be little. What would not the earth be if all men were humble! Man, on the wings of pride, soars above the throne of God, and tramples Deity in the dust: he must be brought down in time, or sink eternally. God owes it to himself either to change or to punish him. Pride is the parent of every sin. Humility may be considered as the parent of every christian virtue. Are we little children in our own estimation? True humility does not arise from ignorance, it is the offspring of light. Self-ignorance is the parent of pride. To be humble we

must know God, and know ourselves. Indeed, we cannot know one without knowing the other.

Sin is not necessary to make an individual humble; but the consciousness of having been sinners will confer on the family of Christ a humility more glorious than the pure and holy angels can attain. The power of heaven and of hell will consist in reminiscence. The recollection of our sins will make us humble, and in consequence of being humble we shall be happy. Supremacy is the glory of God; humility is the ornament of his child. In cultivating other graces, the believer cultivates, as it were, one kind of fruit; in cultivating humility he cultivates the tree on which every other kind of fruit grows, and which the fertility of heaven itself can bring forth.

The apostle calls himself the chief of sinners. There is peculiar humility in this saying. True humility springs from light; and he who knows himself is disposed to use the apostle's language. But there is more than this. He says, *I am*, not, *I was*. A consideration of the history and experience of the apostle will lead us into valuable truths. See him, before his conversion, at the head of the armies of hell, leading the hosts of earth and hell against the church. He was a blasphemer; he spoke evil of the Son of God.

The apostle remembers these things even at the present moment. Look at his subsequent history; changed by grace, and caught up into heaven. He was unquestionably the greatest man (merely man) that ever lived. Yet he says of himself, that he was less than the least of all saints: the least because the greatest. This is easily explained. Sin unfolds its malignity in the bosom of an evil spirit; but it exhibits it still more in the bosom of humanity. It is nowhere to be beheld in all its horrors, as in the bosom of a saint. Sin lived in the bosom of the apostle. "When I would do good evil is present with me." Thus the malignity of sin evinces itself in exact proportion to the fulness of light and grace.

And who so qualified as the apostle was, to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ; so emptied of himself; so full of the glory of God; so conversant with his own bosom. We recognize the wisdom and the beauty of the arrangement, by which the gospel is sent to us in earthen vessels. Men are much better preachers than angels could be; for the gospel is human as well as divine. Humanity must reach the heart of man. The preacher is a sinner, changed, by the grace of God, to one of like passions with ourselves. Angels could not sympathize with us. They could tell us of the glories of God, but

they could not throw themselves into our hearts. The preachers of the gospel are men of like passions with ourselves, as weak as ourselves, resembling us as the face reflects its counterpart in a mirror. If they know a little more than we, they are still in the same path, and only a step or two before us in the way to heaven. The apostle, in the depth of his humility, travelled through the world with his life in his hand. True humility comes from heaven. What is the most glorious proof of a revelation from heaven? It humbles man.

EXPERIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE.

The sinner when changed by the grace of God, leaves, so to speak, one world, and enters into another. The change is so great, that he is a wonder to himself. At first, the believer is but little conscious that his strength proceeds wholly from the Lord. It is absolutely necessary that he should meet with enemies and difficulties, to convince him that the strength is not his own. There is such pride and folly in our hearts, that we are apt to be proud of what the Lord has done for us. The true believer goes on in the road to heaven only in the strength of another. There are those who take up a profession of re-

ligion : they begin in their own strength ; they may go on apparently well for a time ; then they gradually go back, and finally return to their former course.

To learn this lesson, viz. that it is not in our own strength that we can persevere, but in dependence upon God for every thing, may sometimes cost us a great deal, and be very bitter to flesh and blood ; but it is a lesson so infinitely valuable, that we cannot learn it at too dear a rate. Old Christians, who have acquired the deepest knowledge of their own depravity and helplessness, and of the strength and faithfulness of God, show much tenderness to others.

There will be this peculiarity in the experience of the believer in heaven :—he will be better acquainted with finite being and with infinite being than the angels themselves, in consequence of the discipline through which he has been brought while here. He is prepared and disciplined by the Lord himself to excel the angels that are before the throne. See the encouragement thus given to the weak.

It was intended that we should feel, and feel intensely too, for those whom we see in the broad road to destruction. This is the disposition of the Christian. Sin has contracted the human heart : grace enlarges it.

Experimental religion is caricatured by some,

and denied by others. Avoid both extremes. We have experience in every thing else :—why not in religion ? It is necessary that all, to feel the power of Christ within them, should know the Lord. To know him, they must be illuminated and changed by the Spirit of the Lord. It is necessary that man, who is a transgressor, should know God in Christ in a peculiar manner. That he should know him as a divine person who atones for sin ; and God the Father, as a sin-avenging God, who has visited our sins on his own Son. It is impossible to approach God with confidence without knowing the sacrifice that atones for sin.

True religion is immortal ; because God is its author, and its object is immortal and eternal.

Individuals distress themselves, by supposing that religion is something so sublime, that it can never be attained by them. It was the intention of the Lord that the believer should consult his own welfare.

God often gives the believer at first rich assurances. Going on he finds many enemies, and his own corrupt heart the worst. He feels notwithstanding, that if he recedes from God, he must perish for ever ; and, in the midst of all, he cries out with Peter, “ To whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life.”

He doubts at times if he be a child of God ; if

God will lead him on. Most assuredly he will : the principle he possesses is communicated by God himself : let him wait upon the Lord. Men dispute about the perseverance of saints. The arguments brought against it are very weak. Why will the saints persevere ? Because God has purposed from eternity to give them grace to persevere : there is no other reason.

Let not the weakest despond ; let him carry his case and his character to God in Christ : he will find all he needs. Let not the strongest presume. The Lord taught Peter, on several occasions, the evil of presumption. He would walk on the sea ; he would not forsake his Master, though all others did. He was left to prove his own weakness.

The secret of which faith is possessed, is to oppose the Saviour in all his glory to every difficulty and every distress. There is not a saint in heaven that had not every sin to contend with that you have ; and some of them were tried as you never were. Away with doubts ! I do not see how we can go on comfortably unless we learn to exalt Jesus above and beyond all the evil that is in us. It is remarkable, that the Saviour seems hardly ever to have reproved his disciples except for want of faith.

God never engaged to prevent Adam from falling as he has engaged to preserve his people. At the same time, let us remember, that Adam's

fall was entirely his own, and infinitely removed from God. The glories of infinity and eternity interpose to prevent the return of the children of God to sin and misery. The believer, in his trials and conflicts, is sometimes ready to say, "I shall one day perish." No, never! "He who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who hath called you, who also will do it." The Holy Spirit has covenanted to preserve his people for evermore. These truths are calculated to lead the believer to that diligence which is so desirable in all who profess the name of Jesus Christ. In the common affairs of life, does the probability of success tend to slacken, or does it quicken to diligence, in the use of means?

The power of God is as fully engaged to carry on the weakest believer, as it was to carry on to perfection the humanity of the Son of God. Nothing less than this glorious truth is sufficient for the believer; and he knows how to make a wise, holy, and grateful use of it. "Who remembered us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever. Who redeemed us from the hand of the enemy, for his mercy endureth for ever." David, in an ecstatic view of this truth, looks forward through the vista of futurity, and says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

The idea of death ought to fill the believer's soul with joy as his chief blessing. He should cultivate daily friendship with death. No one has a right to wear a smile but a believer. Death is enumerated among the catalogue of his blessings. How are we thus to triumph over death? By anticipating heaven: not only thinking of heaven and desiring to go there after death: but realizing now our future heaven in the bosom of a covenant God.

DEGREES OF GLORY.

Divines have disputed respecting different degrees of glory in heaven; that there will be a difference I have no doubt whatever. For instance, to begin with the Saviour himself. The exquisite suffering which he underwent when here below, enabled him to learn the perfections of God in a degree in which they can never be known by any of his brethren; hence his superior, his supreme bliss as man before the throne of God. Who can tell us what is meant by these words, "Being made perfect through suffering," the perfection to which his humanity was carried when presenting his Father with a sacrifice for sinners. His bliss is proportionate to the depth of his suffering, and there is to be found

in this truth, an analogy which may be applied to his brethren: for we read in Scripture, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." They are used as instruments in the hand of God, in teaching us truths which are absolutely necessary to enable us to drink deep draughts of glory above. What an encouragement have we then to approach the Lord, continually beseeching him, not only to give us resignation and submission to his will, but also to be grateful to him for every affliction here. Whatever portion of suffering may be allotted to us here, may we be enabled to say, perpetually, "Not my will, but thine be done;" thus glorifying him in our life and death, that we may be glorified with him for ever.

SCRIPTURAL COMMENTS.

ON THE PASSOVER.—EXODUS XII.

THE Israelites had in types, in shadows, in promises, what we have in reality. They were taught to repose confidence in Messiah *to come*, as we are in Messiah who is already come. The passover was instituted by the Lord himself, to commemorate the deliverance of the children of Israel, and to typify the sufferings of his own Son : emphatically called the Lamb of God. We have four things presented to us. A type of Christ in his person ; a type of Christ in his sufferings ; a type of the blessings flowing to us from the life, death, and resurrection of Christ ; and an emblem of that faith which receives him, in connexion with that disposition of mind which knows and prizes him, in all his offices.

Ver. 3, 4, 5.—A lamb, emblem of weakness,

lowliness, and patience in suffering: not of a foreign flock—not a borrowed lamb of the heathen, but of the fold of the children of Israel. “A prophet shall the Lord raise up, &c. like unto me.” “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.” It was absolutely necessary that the nature that had transgressed should suffer. “He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”

“A lamb without spot.” Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, &c. A male lamb. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Had the woman only transgressed, we had not died. Eve fell as an individual, Adam as a covenant head. Man must raise man. A year old, in the prime of strength. Jesus was cut off in the full strength of his years, when his body and mind had both attained perfect maturity—the most perfect ever found in created existence.

Ver. 6.—The lamb was bound four days, that it might be thoroughly examined, and be found free from blemish. Jesus was four days in Jerusalem, and hear the testimony concerning him: “I find no fault in him,” said Pilate. “The Holy One of God,” as devils were obliged to confess. “My beloved Son,” is the testimony of the Father. “Truly, this was the Son of God,” said the

centurion. A lamb worthy of God, and worthy of the most unworthy among men.

Again, *all* the Israelites were engaged in killing the lamb.

Ver. 7.—The blood was not to flow on the ground. (God did not plant Socinianism in Egypt.) It was set apart for a peculiar purpose, typifying the worth of the blood of Jesus. Ye are not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.

The blood was to be sprinkled with a bunch of hyssop. No human hand was to touch it. On the lintel and the two side-posts, to denote peace with heaven, and protection on every side; not on the door itself, for that is a moveable thing.

Ver. 8, 9, 10.—The lamb was not only to be killed but eaten. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” The Jews were forbidden to eat the blood, for the blood is the life, and there was no life in the sacrifice: but now the command is, to drink the blood.

It was not to be eaten raw, but roast with fire: typifying the sufferings of the incarnate Son of God, and teaching the necessity of a sacrifice: no life, no mercy, nothing but destruction to a sinner, is to be found in an absolute God. With bitter herbs and unleavened bread: genuine repentance and contrition, sincerity and truth. A

double-minded man cannot feed on Christ. Not bitter herbs *alone*, but the lamb with them: the soul mourning for sin, melted by the love of Jesus. The whole lamb was to be eaten—a whole Christ—to be dear in all his offices, prophet, priest, and king; dear in his promises, dear in his precepts, dear as king of Zion.

Ver. 11, 12, 13.—Evidently implying that they were travellers fleeing from imminent danger, not idlers, not sleepers in sin, not violating the laws of God. Those who are eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God, are fleeing from the peril that must sink others in eternal woe. All idols must fall. There is no salvation to the soul without destruction to all idols. Sin, dear as a right hand, or a right eye, must be subdued. The protection and deliverance were complete. The salvation in Christ is comprehensive and complete: comprising eternal destruction to all enemies, eternal salvation of body and soul.—Ver. 46. Not a bone was to be broken, not one. When Jesus died his work was perfected. Justice required that his body should no more be insulted; it was to receive nothing but respect from every quarter.

Ver. 1.—“This month shall be to you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.” Before the institution of the passover, the Jewish year began in autumn.

Thenceforward it began in spring. Are any of you living in sin, and strangers to the application of the blood of Christ: it is still the autumn of your existence: your summer sun set in Eden. Death will strip you of every idol; and if you die in your sins, a winter of eternal storm awaits you. You who know what it is to eat the Paschal Lamb, and feed on him by faith—it is the spring of your existence. Your sun shall never go down. The beams of the Sun of Righteousness shall illumine the dark valley of the shadow of death; and an eternal summer is beyond. Contrast the Israelites eating the lamb in peace and safety, with the Egyptians mourning the loss of their first-born, and their gods. But what is it in comparison with the state of the friends and the enemies of Jehovah, when time shall be no more?

SINAI.

Some are puzzled about the covenant of Mount Sinai. God cannot enter into a strictly legal covenant with any fallen being. Man by the fall had lost all power of fulfilling the law. The covenant of Mount Sinai was an eminent branch of the covenant of grace. The covenants made with Noah, with Abraham, and with Israel, were all branches of the same covenant, each necessa-

rily comprising a merciful God. As the first ray emanating from the sun, and indicating his approach to the horizon, conveys to us the very same light as that of his meridian effulgence; so from the first promise in Eden, till the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his wings, was it the same mercy.

THE KINSMAN.—LEV. XXV. 25, 47, 48.

1st. The Hebrew “Gal, a redeemer,” was also a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. The incarnation of Christ is the rock upon which the church is built. Infinity and eternity must form the foundation of this rock, or the church would soon sink herself in the quicksands of destruction. God assumed our nature. When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Nature may change. God may cause the sun to rise in the west and set in the east, as is proved by the miracles he has wrought: but all that emanates from the moral perfections of God must be unchangeable as himself. The gospel can never change: a Redeemer is there provided; if that be rejected there can be no salvation.

2ndly. The Jewish kinsman was a redeemer—he redeemed persons, and the forfeited inheritance. “If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession; and if any of his kin come to redeem that which his brother sold: and if a foreigner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger, &c.: after that he is sold, he may be redeemed again: one of his brethren may redeem him.”

Some deny that our Lord's redemption includes both. This type convicts them of error. Error is an assassin. No one but God himself can chain the monster, and prevent the mischief he would otherwise occasion. Our gracious incarnate God has redeemed every good for his people. All was forfeited by sin. God himself; the image of God; the friendship of God; every blessing was forfeited. Our glorious inheritance was repurchased, and our Lord redeemed both the persons and inheritance of his people. It is an absolute impossibility that he could redeem one without the other.

3rdly. The kinsman of old was the avenger of blood. Behold the God of the Jew and the Gentile pursuing the enemies—sin, Satan, death, and hell. He began the pursuit in Eden; he inflicted the avenging blow on Calvary. “Forasmuch 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," &c. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh condemned sin in the flesh." "He will swallow up death in victory.—O death! where is thy sting?" &c. The institution of the ceremonial law proved that the moral law could not justify.

The kinsman of old, after he had avenged the death of his friend, returned to weep over his dead body. Not so our glorious avenger. After he had inflicted vengeance on our enemies, he ascended on high; and visits his church, not to weep over her in her death, but to rejoice in her life. He imparts to her his own life. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

4thly. We see a farther type of the work of our incarnate God as Redeemer, in the kinsman marrying the widow of his friend. Humanity in the sin of Eden was widowed—how withered, how trodden down, how barren! But now listen. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear, break forth into singing;—thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name;" his church, composed of Jew and Gentile, live in him for ever. Read the comment of a converted Jew, in his Epistle to the Ephesians. See the 5th chapter. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

JOB XIX. 23, 24.

Job's wish was very remarkable. "Oh that my words were now written—that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever!"

The wishes of the people of God shall be answered in a manner, and in a way of which they have no conception. Had Job's wish been literally answered, the storms of time would have effaced the memorial: but the Rock of ages presented itself to receive the words; and time, as it rolls on, only illumines their impression. This is but a faint specimen of the way in which God answers his people beyond all that they desire.

ROSE OF SHARON.

Some flowers yield their fragrance only when bruised. See the rose of Sharon—in its death trodden under foot by earth and hell; but again lifting its head, filling heaven with incense, and shedding its fragrance from India to the pole. How beautifully is this typified in the entrance and return of the high priest into the holy of holies! In his own fragrance he presents our persons and prayers to the Father.

THE EAGLE.—ISA. XL. 31.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew

their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

The flight of a professor is like that of an arrow, which ascends as far as the impulse which it receives from the bow will carry it : it is not the flight of life ; having reached that point, it descends as rapidly. The flight of a believer is like that of the eagle. There are three things in the natural history of the eagle :

1. Peculiarity of his eye ;
2. Renewal of his strength ;
3. Superiority of his flight.

1st. The eagle is the only bird that fixes his eye upon the source of light ; he delights to look at the sun : so, the believer turns his eye from every object beneath the sun to gaze on the beauties of the Sun of Righteousness. Other birds see other objects in the light of the sun ; so the men of the world. The Saviour is the only object of the spiritual eye : in him, the Father and the Spirit are seen smiling in an eternity of love. An incarnate God. His prayer on earth was, “ that they may be with me ;” their promised bliss above is, “ They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.” The very face once spit upon shall shine around them and upon them for ever. The eagle’s eye is furnished with two pairs

of eyelids : the inner one, transparent, is drawn over the eye when he gazes on the sun, and protects it from its effulgence. Faith shields the eye from an absolute God, and opens it to see him in Jesus. The humanity of Jesus shields the sight : to behold an absolute God is hell to a transgressor. Sinner, the day is coming when you must look in the face of an absolute God, and there shall be no eyelid to shield the sight.

2ndly. The eagle is the strongest bird in creation : the believer is the strongest of all creatures. We hear much of energy of mind ; true energy of mind consists in opposing moral and spiritual evil ; fighting against the man of sin within, is the only unequivocal proof of energy of mind. Martyrs were called to this trial : first they were brought to the foot of the cross, looking to the blood of Jesus. “ He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty : and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.” Any other energy of mind corresponds with that of Satan. Read the wonders performed by spiritual eagles in the 11th of Hebrews. These, and such names as these only, will shine in the rolls of eternity.

But the eagle is not always strong—he has a moulting season : he does not rise, he is drooping and alone, the laughing-stock of the feathered tribe—he loses his feathers. Young

believer, remember, though now in the time of your first love you dream of no change, and rejoice, like the young eagle, to trim your wings; a change will come, (it is well that you should lose some feathers, the feathers of vanity, pride, and self-conceit)—you will have a moulting season. Mark the conduct of the eagle: he cannot rise to the sun, but he delights to show himself to the sun; his feathers grow again, then woe be to his enemies—and thy youth, renewed like the eagle's by the genial warmth of the Sun of Righteousness, you shall scale heaven a second time: "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day:" a silent process is carried on by the God of nature: a similar work is carried on for the believer: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

The sovereignty and authority of God are indissolubly connected: it is in waiting upon God: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

3rdly. The flight of the eagle is superior in three respects—rapidity, rectitude, and sublimity. 1st. When he chooses he passes all birds with ease. "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth." "His word runneth very swiftly." God's work is rapid; the effect is as

rapid ; the believer ascends directly : “ Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadab.” The two lines of Dr. Johnson, on Shakspeare, are applicable to none but a believer.

“ Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain.”

Apply them to a believer : “ I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,” &c. He becomes an inheritor of eternity here below.

Secondly. The eagle flies straight to the sun ; so the believer fixes his eye on the Sun of Righteousness, and as he flies, hear him singing—“ Whom have I in heaven but thee ? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” “ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death ; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

Thirdly. He flies higher ; and who shall ascend the highest ? who have the richest enjoyment of God's treasures ? The Church of God.

We are peculiarly concerned with present flight ; and if asked, when may I know that I ascend the highest ?—When the eagle flies highest

the world is the least in his sight. "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity." This is the view of the spiritual eagle.

To conclude. The eagle is a bird of day; there are birds of night. Whoever seeks any thing excellent out of God, is an owl or a bat, not an eagle. The owl sees best in thick darkness, he hates the light of day. Sinners love darkness rather than light. But the hour is coming when every bird of the night shall seek refuge in the thickest darkness, and seek it in vain.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee," &c. (Isa. xliii. 2.)

Sometimes a father throws his child into deep waters to make him expert in swimming: but throwing himself in with him holds him up, and makes him happy. So God often plunges his children in deep waters, and takes away all stays but himself: as with the disciples in the storm, when all hope had ceased, they called upon Jesus: "Lord, save us, we perish." He must be known as God, all-sufficient. Let us not suppose that God has forsaken his people at the present day. When in a day of universal apostasy, the three servants of the Lord who cleaved to him with full purpose of heart, were cast into the

furnace, their bands alone were burned: thus God annihilates all that is evil, and preserves all that is good. When the king looked into the fiery furnace, what did he behold? Messiah there! When Daniel was in the lions' den the beasts had no appetite; Jehovah was there. Remember, that support under trials is a more glorious manifestation of the presence of God, than deliverance from them. God visits his children in affliction: he puts himself into their troubles. Then welcome trials, affliction, pain, sickness; they are but for a season. The consciousness of support is more than deliverance. Follow on then to know the Lord.

JONAH, CHAP. I.

From the history of Jonah learn,

1. That strong corruption is co-existent with strong grace in the heart of the child of God.
2. When the child of God goes astray, his heavenly Father follows him with a rod.
3. All difficulties are infinitely removed from God. He knows none.
4. All creatures are the ministers of God, and move at his command.
5. The prevalence of prayer in distress.

6. Man at his best estate is altogether vanity.
7. Salvation is of the Lord—from first to last.

“ *My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*”

(Matt. xi. 30.)

When have we heard of such a yoke or burden? In the common acceptation of the words, we should say, that that yoke was easy which did not gall the shoulder; but if we were to stop here, we should have a very inadequate idea of the truth meant to be conveyed: it is a yoke which is a blessing to him who wears it, and delightful too,—(so the word might be translated.) The yoke that Christ puts upon the neck of his people, is no other than that which he himself, as man, wears in glory. “In that he liveth, he liveth unto God.” “Then shall the Son himself be subject unto the Father.” And, considering what his blessedness and glory must be, who does not lift up his heart to God, saying,—Lord, make me a partaker of the blessed yoke worn by my forerunner, Jesus, and make me to delight in it for ever!

This yoke will sometimes be painful to flesh and blood; but the fault is not in the yoke, but in our rebellion and unbelief. “Like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.” (Jer. xxxi. 18.)

“His burden is light.” The word signifies not

only lightness, but activity, as of a stag ; so far from resembling the incumbrance caused by any earthly burden, which implies a weight or pressure of some kind. The burden of Messiah gives feet to the lame, yea, wings to the pilgrim soul. "Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." God created the intellect and the feelings of man for himself ; and unless the one and the other are directed to that object, neither can be satisfied. Nothing expands the intellect, and brings it to maturity, like the knowledge of God's moral perfections ; nothing else can regulate and delight the feelings. Rebellion is misery ; obedience is bliss.

"He is meek and lowly in heart." When he was here, under the curse, he was lower than the lowest in hell ; he is now, though enthroned on the right hand of God, the lowliest among the lowly ; he is, as man, the most humble among his brethren, excelling them in that and in every other grace, from his more intimate acquaintance with the divine perfections.

"A woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him," &c. (Matt. xv. 22.)

This Canaanitish woman was acquainted with God, and with herself. We are not informed how she obtained the knowledge ; nor, if we were,

would it be of any importance to us: we only know generally, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." She had "beheld the glory of Christ, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." She addresses him, ver. 22, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David." Now Scripture states, "that no one can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." She was a believer,—indeed a believer of eminent faith, and had believed his testimony that he came to "seek and to save that which was lost." Deeply humbled by self-knowledge, she yet approached the Lord with a disposition equally remote from presumption and from despair. She did not think herself too unworthy to draw nigh to him; she honoured the Saviour by approaching him as an all-sufficient deliverer; and we must all do so likewise, or we are undone. When sin, only, appears before the mind, unbelief takes up a formidable station in the heart, and says, What right have you to expect the blessings of redemption? But, when faith is imparted, the soul lays hold of Jesus' free invitation, and triumphs over the enemy. He who has faith will be tried: our religion must be put to the test: "He answered her not a word." (ver. 23.) Thus the believer may not receive any answer to his repeated solicitations, and may, for a time, have to

wait in vain. But it is to be remembered, that perseverance in prayer is one of God's methods of answering petitions. "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (ver. 24.) All obstacles seemed to be thrown in her way: God and his church appeared to reject her. "Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me." (ver. 25.) Here is perseverance: she would not be silenced. Believer, imitate her! In the darkest hour, persevere! "It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs." (ver. 26.) Every thing now appeared marshalled against her; impossibilities interposed; but she goes on, full of faith and humility:—"Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." The heathen were considered as dogs by the Jews, and the holy Spirit gives that appellation to sinners. "Without are dogs." This humble woman places herself among them; and this is a proof of her being, what in reality she was, one of the family of heaven. The Lord will answer the believer's prayer, when he has made him sensible of his unworthiness. Pride forms an obstacle to a speedy answer; and therefore the blessing is delayed, that, eventually, it may be more gratefully and more highly esteemed. I appeal to you who know the plague of your own hearts. Is not this woman's conduct worthy of imitation? "If

the vision tarry, wait for it." The Lord has a fixed time for every thing: therefore Christ used to say, "My hour is not yet come." His time is that moment best calculated to display his own glory. At last, her perseverance was crowned with success. "O woman, great is thy faith? be it unto thee even as thou wilt!" (ver. 28.)

Happy is that person whom distress drives to Christ! Happy is that person who is determined not to leave the Saviour, be the consequences what they may. The same lesson of humility, faith, and perseverance, we find inculcated in another form, in the history of Jacob, when he wrestled with the angel, and said, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." Faith is eminently crowned, even in this world, when by it peace is introduced into the conscience by the blood of Jesus.

The covenant of grace, comprises all the interests and all the circumstances of the believer. Now, faith ought to be as comprehensive as the covenant, and to lead us to commit all our friends, connexions, and interests, into the hands of God. Hereafter, the redeemed will view, with astonishment and gratitude, the goodness and wisdom of God, which guided them through this wilderness safely into his own presence.

This, then, is the disposition we are to culti-

vate :—a deep sense of unworthiness, and a still deeper sense of the glory of Christ as a Saviour. It is a sense of his mediatorial glory which truly humbles, and constitutes a broken heart and contrite spirit. In proportion as the enemies of God are visited with punishment, so does their pride rise in rebellion and hatred against him. The child and nursling of Christ, is a consciousness of our unworthiness, and, at the same time, a persuasion that his glory, as a mediator, is superior to it. This spirit will lead us to wait on God, day after day, in the midst of storms and tempests. We see also the wisdom of faith: instead of being deterred by difficulties, make use of them as encouragements. Let us go and do likewise.

“ Let not your heart be troubled,” &c.

(John xiv. 1, 2.)

The Saviour had begun to prepare his disciples for his departure; and they were distressed at the idea of being separated from him who had evinced for them so strong an affection. They were slow in learning the lesson here proposed to them; but they eventually acquired it in the most perfect manner possible; and the triumphant consequence was, that they were undismayed by all the malice of men and devils. He comforts

them by the assurance, that though absent as man, he should be present with them as God. Whatever exalted ideas you possess of the Father, cherish similar ideas of me, as a God of providence. Ye believe in God the Father,—believe also in me, as the Son of God, the God-man, possessed of all his perfections. Believe that there is a plurality of persons in Jehovah. The time is coming, when, in consequence of your ingratitude toward me, in the hour of my distress, ye will no longer be able to look up to God as a reconciled Father, but will regard him as armed with wrath—as a sin-avenging God. Then believe in me, as a sin-atonement God, ready to receive you back again. Whatever ideas you entertain of God, as a just God, believe also in the riches of my atonement, and in its efficacy to save and present you faultless before the throne.

“ *Leaving us an example,*” &c. (1 Pet. ii. 21.)

Jesus Christ died to atone for sin ; and he has left us the example of his life, that his atonement, under the influence of his Holy Spirit, might present us with a rich motive of action, and his example furnish us with the fullest light to tread in the narrow, but safe path, till we arrive in his presence above. Sometimes a guide is obliged

to direct travellers how and where to place their feet ; addressing them thus :—Look not only at my person—fix your eyes also upon the position of my feet—see how I descend this precipice, and ascend that—place your feet just where I place mine, and you will be perfectly safe. Now, mark the language of Scripture ! “Leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps.”

“ *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*” (Romans viii. 14.)

The Greeks and Romans were in the habit of adopting the children of strangers, and it has been supposed that the apostle had an eye to this custom, when speaking of the adoption of God’s people ; but the expression is of much older and of sacred origin, and is to be found in the Old Testament as well as in the New ; “Israel is my son, even my first-born ;” (Exod. iv. 22 ;) “I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born ;” (Jer. xxxi. 9 ;) “I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters ;” (2 Cor. vi. 18 ;) “To whom pertaineth the adoption.” (Rom. ix. 4.) This relationship is the most glorious that can be imagined. Its origin is the sovereign pleasure of Jehovah : “Having pre-

destinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." (Eph. i. 5.) We shall be going astray continually, more or less, unless we live under the spirit of adoption. It is a spirit of love to God and man. All experiences are to be discarded, which do not contain this principle. The spirit of love is that in which the Holy Spirit unfolds itself. The proof that we are the sons of God is, that we are led by the Spirit of God; no less proof is sufficient, either to ourselves or others. The manner in which our sonship is proved, is, that we are led by the Holy Spirit to value, to prize, and to honour the moral government of God; and in exact proportion as we know his moral government, shall we learn to prize his sovereignty; it is a taste for the former that enables us to delight in the latter. The Holy Spirit leads from all moral evil, to all moral good; from all penal evil, which is the consequence of spiritual evil, to all spiritual bliss. Religious experience must be founded on the moral government of God, and be in harmony with his revealed will. The blessing of adoption is connected with the most profound humility. The truth is, nothing but a spirit of deep humiliation will dispose man to receive this high blessing, the most glorious that is to be bestowed by God. The soul must be humbled in exact pro-

portion to the greatness of the blessing to be received. In Jesus, God confers himself; confers upon the penitent sinner more than has been bestowed upon angels in heaven. When this truth is brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit, what effects may it not produce! Love to God and man will, and must, be introduced and shed abroad in the heart of the happy believer.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness,” &c.
(Rom. viii. 16.)

This text has frequently been abused, as if a voice were necessary within us, to testify that we are the children of God. By no means. The Spirit of God testifies with our spirits, that we are the children of God by strengthening his own work within our hearts, carrying it on through the medium of his revealed will. The question may now be asked, how am I to know that I am a child of God; and prove satisfactorily to myself, that the Spirit of God testifies to my spirit, that such is the case? I answer; the individual in whom the Spirit of God testifies with his spirit that he is a child of God, embraces the truth of God; and in proportion to the delight with which he receives it, is he conscious of his heavenly relationship. The

voice of the Spirit is his voice in the volume of revelation; and the ear which attends to this voice of the Spirit is the ear of the new man, or new principle. When rightly viewed, it is simplicity itself. God grant that we may be thus taught to know that we are sons and daughters of the living God, by the influence of his Spirit within, and by the effects' it produces! Delight in the revealed will of God, and conscientiously treading in his holy ways. I know no other test.

“ The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

The perfections of Deity resolve themselves, in the sympathies of the Saviour's humanity, into all their essential beauties.

Expose a prism to the sun, and you immediately see him resolving all his glories into the native beauties of light. The Sun of Righteousness in the sufferings of humanity, resolves all the glories of Deity into the beauties and excellencies of him, who is light inaccessible. The perfections of Deity concentrating in the faculties and feelings of the Saviour, pour forth all their refluent streams in the graces of his huma-

nity. God is incomprehensible to finite being. The naked eye could never have discovered the beauties of light in the sun : but by an intervening medium, we become fully acquainted with both. Behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and remember that the same glory is destined to live eternally in all his brethren.

“ *Beware of the concision—we are the circumcision,*” &c. (Phil. iii. 2, 3.)

The apostle was ardently desirous of attaining purity in every respect. A pure creed without any alloy of evil was the object he had in view ; and the pure influence of a pure creed on the human heart, was his laborious, delightful, and successful pursuit. The apostle would have us consider well the import of the two words, concision and circumcision. Concision separated those who were brethren in the Lord Jesus. Circumcision separated the family of God from their sins : this work was typical of the work of the Holy Spirit on the human heart, separating the individual from his guilt and pollution, and devoting him to the service of the living God.

“ His Son whom he hath appointed heir of all things,” &c. (Heb. i. 2.)

The Saviour is essentially (not officially) the Son of God. He is officially the servant of God ; essentially and economically the heir of God ; economically because essentially. As the Son of God, he is necessarily the heir of all things, and must have been so for ever, had he not died to redeem his church from the wrath to come. He is not only the essential Son of God, but the heir of all things ; and so the apostle reasons in these verses.

The idea of Christ being appointed heir of all things is this : that his humanity is so highly exalted in union with Deity, that it participates at the present moment in his glory. As God, he was heir of all things from eternity ; as God and man, he is now constituted heir of all things ; every thing existing is under his government. He prays himself, and, addressing the Father, says, “ Glorify thy Son with the glory which he had with thee before the world began ;” that is, let my humanity participate in the glory of my Deity.

“ Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” What is the inheritance ? Deity in all his glory. We are sons of God in consequence of being united to him who is the essential Son of God. He is the head of all things ; and why ? For the sake of his church, to lead her triumphant through time to eternity.

“ *When Moses had spoken,*” &c. (Heb. ix. 19, &c.)

Read the Lord’s directions for the cleansing of the leper, in the 14th chapter of Leviticus. In the resurrection and ascension of Christ we see the great antitype and type at once before us. Our heaven has been purified with blood, or we never should have been able to enter it. The infinite worth of Messiah must fill the worship of his people; and the consciousness of the cleansing efficacy of his blood will alone enable us to bid adieu to all the vanities of this world, and live flying perpetually on eagle’s wings to our Father and our God. It is a heaven purified by blood. The blood of Christ was necessary to purify heaven for sinners—to purify it from the remembrance of sin—heavenly things with better sacrifices.

Mark what Christ did to the leper when on earth. When the leper approached and worshipped, the Saviour touched him. Why? He is the God of the Jewish dispensation, and therefore he had a right to alter his own ordinances. But he did not change the moral law: this is as unchangeable as Jehovah. He was present in his own merit and worth, and stood in no need of types and shadows.

“ *Are they not all ministering spirits,*” &c.
(Heb. i. 14.)

Think not lightly of a life of faith : the church below is highly esteemed by angels : they know the church above is beyond the reach of danger ; but their sympathy is peculiarly exercised towards the church below, and it is their delight to descend from heaven to minister to the heirs of salvation. They feel deeply interested at the spectacle of a man struggling with his strong corruptions, sometimes beaten down by them, but again able to rally and drive before him the hosts of hell. The imperfections of the church ought not to alienate our affections from it ; but rather to call love into new exercise.

“ *Wherefore,*” &c. (Heb. xii. 1, 2.)

“ Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us ; looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith : who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

I deprecate that cold, lethargic criticism, which would confine the sense of the words, “ so great

a cloud of witnesses," to that of the worthies of former ages having left us an example to be followed. The apostle undoubtedly meant, that those just persons who had run their race, and finished their course with joy, were then looking down from heaven, and regarding with intense interest their brethren who were engaged in that conflict in which they themselves had lately come off victorious. It is certain, from scripture, that there is a very active intercourse carried on between this world and the world of spirits, both as regards evil spirits, who are endeavouring to destroy us, and good spirits, who are ministering servants to the heirs of salvation. All this will, by-and-by, be unfolded to our view, and we shall learn the obligations we are under to holy angels for the services they have rendered us. Now it is impossible to suppose that angels are not acquainted with what takes place here below, and that the "spirits of just men made perfect" are not so also. the church below is as dear to God and to his holy angels as is the church above; the church above delights as much in that below as she delights in herself. The church above has learned to perfection the law of mutual love, and hence the redeemed are as much interested in us as in themselves. God, Christ, angels, and saints, have their eyes fixed upon us. May this truth fill our hearts with holy solemnity and

circumspection, and preserve our minds in a happy equilibrium between presumption and despair. The saints were, in themselves, neither better nor worse than we are, and cannot but feel deeply interested in our success. May the remembrance of this excite in our hearts the prayer—"Lord, make us faithful unto death!"

SHORT SENTENCES.

THE disposition to give a cup of cold water to a disciple is a far nobler property than the finest intellect. Satan has a fine intellect, but not the image of God.

It is not my sense of guilt that entitles me to approach the Saviour, but his invitation. I may, therefore, safely go at all times. No sin under the gospel dispensation can cause the loss of the soul but that of rejecting the remedy.

He who was rich for our sakes became poor: essentially rich—poor in circumstances.

Sorrow was his element, because sin was ours.

The whole secret of religion consists in prizing aright the mercy of God. Christ pleads for mercy to man, in justice to himself.

Man would be condemned on any plan of his own. He always falls short of his professions.

The difference between a true and a false hope, is this :—A false hope is founded in ignorance, falsehood, and presumption. It lives in unholliness, and lives only in prosperity. It separates the means from the end. It looks for heaven, and yet is ever on the way to hell. A true hope delights in God, and in his ways ; it unites the end and the means, and that diligently and perpetually. It is humble, modest, patient ; and it thrives equally in prosperity and adversity.

The invitations of God in his word, and the example of saints in the Bible, fully justify the believer's trusting in God, and expecting help and deliverance, even out of trouble and afflictions, which he has brought wholly on himself by his own perverseness and sin. We see this clearly in the case of Jonah, Jehoshaphat, and others.

There is an essential difference between the believer in his lowest state—backsliding—and an unbeliever in his best state.

God saw in his people, from eternity, more evil than they will ever see or know experimentally ; yet he loved them ! What encouragement is here when our hearts are ready to sink !

Man never trusts God till he is *obliged* to do so.

There can be no secret purpose in God op-

posed to his command. As God, therefore, commands all men to repent and come to him, none need distress themselves about election.

When God promises, he does it primarily to his own perfections ; the believer, therefore, under all his sense of sin and unworthiness, can and ought to ascend higher than the consideration of himself.

God paid down himself as the price of our redemption. His humanity was the medium of his doing so.

Deity could not suffer torment ; but Deity could annihilate torment.

Election is necessarily connected with the responsibility of the creature, and consequently with the freedom of his will.

It is true that God has predestinated his own ends ; it is equally true that he has predestinated the means that lead to those ends. Some persons are for ever contending for God's decrees, forgetting that means are part of those decrees.

When injured by any one, we should remember that God presents to us the most glorious opportunity of showing forth his own image—mercy and forgiveness.

In one sense, all natural men are atheists. They acknowledge a God, but not the God of the Bible. They imagine to themselves a god

like themselves. They measure the justice, and other attributes of God by their own moral feeling; and by this means all suit the mercy and justice of God to their own individual case.

The very same perfections of God, which constitute the happiness of saints in heaven, will be the occasion of enhancing the miseries of the lost. Thus we see the different effects produced by the sun on a living and a dead body. The former it cheers and comforts, the latter it renders putrid and loathsome. The sun is the same in both cases; the difference lies in the capacity and condition of the recipients.

There is virtue enough in the Sun of Righteousness to save the whole race of man; yet not more than enough to save a single individual; for each needs an infinite sacrifice, an infinite righteousness. Thus, the natural sun is sufficient to warm and mature the produce of the whole earth; yet not a single plant can thrive without it.

In reading Scripture, the rule should be, to explain the texts that are difficult, by those that are plain and easy. But men love rather to form their opinions from, and dwell on, those which are difficult.

The truths of God are to be learned by obedience. "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine."

If the words disposition and indisposition were used, instead of ability and inability, in speaking of man's moral state, much difficulty would be removed from the minds of many. Man's cannot, is, in truth, he will not.

The absence of Christ is not mourned where his presence has not been known.

Christ is the object of attraction to the believer's heart. Place a loadstone amongst straw, feathers, or rubbish, and they are not affected; but a piece of metal is drawn towards it at once. Apply this spiritually.

God the Father is essentially as much the Judge of man as the Son; but the immediate administration of judgment is committed to the Son.

God delights in all he does, but supremely in the salvation of man.

God's moral perfections, travelling into his preceptive will, must reach man.

We evince our oneness with Adam by our disobedience, and our oneness with Christ by our obedience.

The punishment of sin is only the expression of God's hatred of sin.

Consider the distance to which an absolute God was removed from sin—the proximity in the Son of his love.

God is infinitely glorified in the forgiveness of every sin.

God forgives not only the workings of sin, but the principle also.

The transition from a state of nature to a state of grace is more wonderful than the transition from grace to glory.

The greatest and most glorious work of God is the renovation of the human soul into his image..

God has promised that his work within us shall be as perfect as his work for us.

The church is a mirror, in which all the glories of God will be reflected for ever.

It is a greater honour to wear the image of the holiness of God than, if it were possible, for God to invest us with creative power.

Heaven is a holy heaven ; and the mercy which prepares for it is a holy mercy. God must delight in his own image.

Nothing can comprehend holiness, but the image of that holiness.

Keep your eye on the immutability of God. The church is as safe on the billows as Christ himself was.

The oath is an act of infinite condescension in God. The same thing if repeated millions of times by God would acquire no additional glory.

The evil of pride is too little attended to. Pride enters into the essence of every sin we

commit—it involves a preference of ourselves to God.

The holiness of the humanity of Christ is one eternal stream flowing from his deity.

The Saviour's work is the work of humanity, inspired with all the glories of deity.

No privileges will ever raise a man above responsibility ; and no visitation, whether on earth or in hell, will ever sink him below it.

We are so constituted that we must be ceaselessly employed in good or evil.

In working miracles, man has not necessarily any communion with God. Moses had no more communion with the natural perfections of God than the rod in his hand.

We pray for ourselves in exact proportion as we pray against ourselves.

We approach the Father in the work of the Son, under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

God has two thrones in each of his family—one in the intellect, the other in the affections ; and he reigns delightfully in both.

We learn the truth of God, as we ought to learn it, in proportion as we feel the necessity of it.

The bodies of saints, after the resurrection, will be beautiful indeed ; but only transparent caskets of the jewels within.

SKELETONS OF SERMONS.

1 COR. xv. 45.

*“ The first man Adam was made a living soul ;
the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”*

1. A living soul. Gen. ii. 7. Includes a four-fold perfection.

1. Reason. Reason raised man above the brute ; made him capable of the friendship of angels and of God.

2. Spirituality. Comprising knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness in his intellect and affections.

3. Happiness. In innocence man was necessarily happy in God.

4. Immortality. Created for eternity — not independently immortal ; none but God so. 1 Tim. vi. 16.

In what sense he died. His reason, how clouded ; how foolish with respect to God ; yet reasonable and accountable !

II. A quickening spirit.

1. As God, possessing independent life ; comprising eternity.

2. As the covenant head of his people, he quickens and raises them from the depths of degradation to the heights of glory.

3. As God-man, possessing the Spirit without measure—a fountain of life. Ps. xxxvi. 9.

He will continue to quicken till the period mentioned in ver. 54. John xiv. 6, 19.

1. He quickens from spiritual death. Eph. ii. 5—7.

2. He quickens and refreshes in seasons of deep affliction by his word. Ps. cxix. 50. 149.

3. He quickens and restores from a backsliding state. Prov. xxiii. 3 ; Hos. xiv. 4.

3. He quickens from the grave. Phil. iii. 20, 21.

1. Look abroad : man is alive to trifles, but thoughtless of eternity. Hence the necessity of a quickening spirit.

2. Contrast the effects produced by the quickening spirit. Gal. ii. 20 ; Col. iii. 3, 4 ; John x. 10.

JOHN xii. 32.

“ I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”

I. Man, as an apostate, has been allured and seduced from God. One sin separates for ever. The effects of sin on devils—on men—on earth—in hell.

II. God's provision for restoring. A divine person took humanity. Lifted up :

1. On the cross. John iii. 14, 15. In the heart of Satan's kingdom. In the midst of flying serpents. (The type.)

2. From earth to heaven. A highway. Captivity led captive.

III. The blessings emanating from his work.

(1.) Man is delivered from the iron grasp of sin.

1. From licentiousness in life.

2. From carelessness, formality, self-dependence.

3. From a worldly spirit.

(2.) Is drawn to Jesus himself,

1. To be invested with his righteousness.

2. To wear his image.

3. To let the world see how he serves the Lord.

(3.) How he is drawn.

1. By mercy.

2. By justice.

3. By the Spirit.

1. All are drawn by sin and Satan to hell.

2. All must be drawn from sin and Satan to

God.

3. Prayer. Draw us, &c.

P R A Y E R S.

INFINITELY just, and infinitely merciful God! lead us anew to thyself in the Son of thy love Jesus Christ, and make us conscious that we have passed from death unto life, and therefore shall not come into condemnation. Give us to know that we have parted with every thing in principle for thee—that there is nothing good to be found in any thing, or every thing, without thyself. Convince us of this important truth, that knowing what we are if left to ourselves, and the awful spirit that inhabits our bosoms, we may seek and find an almighty Physician to forgive all our sins, to heal all our diseases, to prepare us for a glorious hereafter, to enable us to tread beneath our feet time and all its vanities, that we may lift up our heads even at the present moment in our covenant head and representative above the skies. Give us, we beseech

thee, the increasing influence of thy Holy Spirit, that we may walk and even run the race of glory with new delight, day after day, till we eventually arrive in thy presence above, perfect in thy perfection, holy in thy holiness, and happy in thy bliss. During our journey through this wilderness, we have many and mighty enemies to contend with, both internal and external; suffer us not to parley with any of them for a moment, but teach us to oppose thyself to them and exalt thyself above them all. Dispose us to listen to thine own voice, and to turn a deaf ear to every other.

Thou hast thrown thine own arm around us.

May the power that has preserved us hitherto preserve us henceforth for ever. We solicit every blessing at thy hand for Jesus Christ's sake.

O LORD GOD of heaven and earth, may the consideration of thy majesty and of thy mercy humble us in the dust before thee. Grant that a supreme desire of holiness may make us devote ourselves entirely to thy service. Thou, and thou only, O God, canst influence us to do this. Remind us, that a little religion will only make us miserable; we must have much to render us happy. Write thy law and thy gospel on our

hearts in all the characters of eternity. O remind us of the uncertainty of our existence, and of the certainty of death and judgment, of heaven and of hell. Preserve us from all error in principle, and from every thing sinful in practice. Teach us to know ourselves, in delightful obedience to thy will, to be the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Enable us to go on hand in hand, and heart in heart, until we surround thy throne in glory. Make sin and Satan to know that God is with us, teaching our hands to war, and our fingers to fight; and make us to know our enemies, that we may fight and conquer every one of them; and let the glory be thine, and all the blessings of victory ours for ever. Hear us, O Lord God, and enable us to study thy truth. May we delight, above all things, in serving thee. Teach us to hate sin with a perfect hatred, and to love thee with a perfect love. Lead us on from strength to strength, and from grace to grace, till we are holy as thou art holy, and perfect as thou art perfect. We ask all for Jesus Christ's sake.

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