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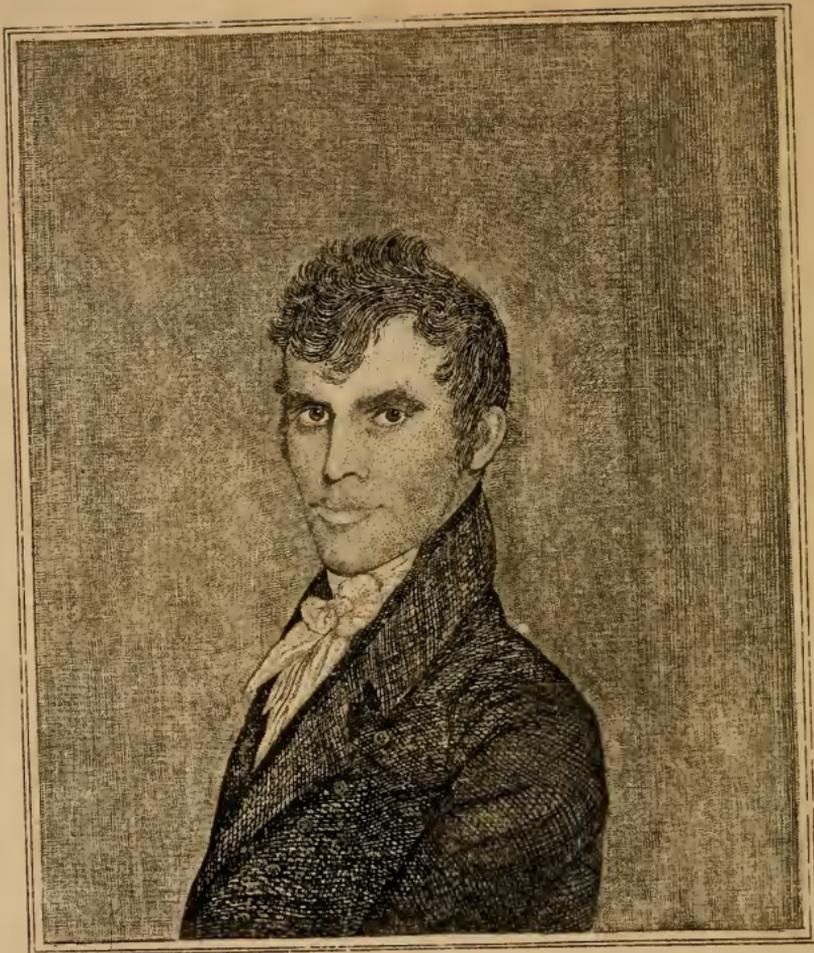
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S. Sturdevant Sc. Lex. Ky.

The Rev. James M. Chord

SERMONS

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS,

SELECTED

FROM THE MANUSCRIPTS

OF THE LATE

Rev'd. JAMES M·CHORD, A. M.

—●—

*“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not
thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either
this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.” Ec. xi. 6.*

—●—

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PREFACE.

The Rev'd. JAMES M'CHORD, the author of the following sermons, was born in Baltimore, state of Maryland, 29th March, 1785, and was carried by his father and mother into Kentucky while he was only a child. During the years 1800 and 1801 he was introduced into an acquaintance with the Latin and Greek classics by Mr. E. Sharpe, who at that time was the master of a flourishing school, called "the Lexington Academy;" and in 1802 he attended the scientific course in Transylvania University.

In November, 1805, he entered the Theological Seminary at New-York, under the care of the Rev'd. J. M. Mason. He continued there until May, 1809; when he returned to Kentucky, and was licensed by the Associate-Reformed Presbytery of Ky. at Lexington, 3d November following. He was ordained "Sine Titulo" by the same Presbytery, at Millersburgh, 18th April, 1811.

On Sabbath, July 30th, 1815, he opened the Market-Street Church, which had been built for the purpose of securing his services to Lexington and its vicinity. His text was, "And he said it is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Isaiah xlix. 6. The afternoon's discourse was by a friend, from—"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Eph. iii. 8.

In Nov. 1819, he moved to Paris, Bourbon county; and in April following was moved back again to the vicinity of Lexington, where he died, 29th of May, 1820, at the house of his father-in-law, D. Logan, Esq. His remains were deposited under the front of the church in Market-Street, and a marble slab in the back of the pulpit records the fact, with this motto—"The resurrection of the just shall unfold his character."

His last appearance in Market-Street Church was on Sabbath, February 6th, 1820. His text was, "With God is terrible majesty. Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict." Job xxxvii. 22, 23.

He was to have returned that day three weeks to dispense the Lord's Supper;—but his course was finished.—He never travelled more, and preached only a few times more. His last discourse was delivered in the Methodist Church in Paris.

It has been supposed by some of his friends that there is enough of important matter connected with the few years of his public service to make a volume of considerable interest. But whether ever that matter can be so arranged as to be worthy of the public eye, is at present altogether uncertain.

The discourses now offered to the public have been selected with some care from the manuscripts which he left behind him. Of their literary merits the editors presume not to go into any detail. They are, however, confident that, under all the disadvantages of a posthumous publication, they will be found to contain the stamina, and to have a considerable share of the polish, of compositions of the first order.

The two first in the volume were the last which he wrote, and are the only two of which any thing like a copy has been found, of eight or nine which he delivered on the Divine perfections. The two last were among the first which he preached, and the one exhibits what were his views at that time of the general state of the churches among whom he was to labour as a travelling preacher, and the other holds up an example to be followed by all churches who in the day of severe trial would wish to be faithful to their risen and exalted Head.

In the 18th discourse, page 285, there is reference to a visitation of Providence which is still fresh in the memory of most of us. On Sabbath, July 20, 1817, in a most tremendous thunder storm, the lightning struck the 1st Presbyterian Church, and two worthy ladies were taken to heaven in the manner described. The one was an aged

mother in Israel, and was a widow. The other was a married lady, in the prime of life, and had just before the service commenced intimated to her pastor her desire of being admitted to the communion, which was to be on the following Sabbath. The congregation had just commenced singing, and were finishing the first couplet of the 103d Hymn, Book 2d.

“Come, happy souls, approach your God
With new melodious songs;
Come, tender to almighty grace
The tribute of your tongues.”

The ardent piety—the stern integrity—and the deep concern for the salvation of immortal beings, which run through the whole of these discourses, must, we think, be seen; and the force with which these feelings are expressed must, we think, be felt, more or less, by every reader. May God, who only can speak to the heart, and who only can change the heart, grant—that while the understanding is in some degree enlightened, the heart may also be led to embrace and to rest upon the proffered mercy.

By those particularly who knew the author, and by those who occasionally, or who frequently heard him proclaim the great salvation, this volume ought to be considered as a “Voice from the Tombs.” To have known the author, and to have been his friend and companion in his tribulations, will not avail us much, unless we also know his Master, and be the friend and servant of his Master, and be his brother and companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

Gospel Hearer,—The author of the volume now before you was during sixteen years of the best part of his life entirely devoted to the great work of the ministry. Five of these were passed in preparatory studies, being added to four years study which he had passed before he had fully determined to what particular profession his life was to be devoted; and eleven of them were spent in actual service. Hence, though at the time these discourses were written their composition was to him an easy task, and some of them probably were the result of a single sitting

—yet they are in fact the result of years of hard study, the result of much reading and of much thinking, and of several fatiguing journeys—and the matter contained in them, and the faculty of expressing that matter in the manner in which it is expressed, were in fact procured by the author at the expense of his life, and at the expense of upwards of two thousand dollars, furnished him at different times by an affectionate father. Nor does he this day repent—nor did he ever even on earth, under all the discouragements under which he was called to labour, repent of having spent his patrimony and the vigour of his animal spirits in this service. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish; but have everlasting life.” He personally knew the value of this gift, and all that he had at command was too little to express the sense which he had of his obligations to infinite love. He knew also that all must perish who do not believe on the Son of God, and that the ordinance of the gospel ministry was God’s great ordinance for leading lost and perishing men to the Saviour of the world. He therefore considered no sacrifice and no labour too great when the question was, “Shall immortal souls be saved or perish?”

Gospel Hearer, whosoever thou art—Accept for thyself the proffered salvation, and thy joy and thy reward shall be of the same kind with his.

R. H. BISHOP,
JOHN M. FARLAND.

February, 1822.

SERMON I.

Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee.
1 Kings viii. 27.

“BLESSED is the nation whose God is Jehovah; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.” It was amid one of the most lofty and rapturous strains recorded in the book of God, that the father of this Solomon, whose grandeur and piety you were a moment ago contemplating, introduced the sentiment we have just repeated.

With the magnificent and awful character of the Deity your minds have never become so perfectly familiarized as to note the exhibition of it without a strong emotion. You can enter fully into the feelings of the psalmist when he bursts upon you with thrilling delineations of the Most High, in all his magnificence, and purity, and tenderness. You can lift up your response to the voice of adoration, when he celebrates the might of his wonder-working arm, and descants upon the mercies of his all-pervading providence. But you are at a loss to conceive how it should swell the song of triumph, when to delineations like the following, he adds the sentence with which we saluted you: “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He

gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him: for he spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast. The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought; he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations." Psalm xxxiii. 6—11. These notes swell loftily as if from the harp of cherubim; and you yourselves admit that while rapt seraphim repeat them, it is fit that every creature should add its own amen. But is it not like descending from a strain so elevated, when the psalmist, aiming to add another rapturous note, exclaims, "blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."

You cannot enter fully into the spirit of the psalmist: For it is a Christian nation with which Providence has allied you: Christianity is the religion of the civilized world, and you have had intercourse with none who have not profited by its lights: Christianity has been for ages the religion of your fathers, and of almost every people with whom they have been connected. Two hundred millions of your fellow creatures call this the Sabbath of the Lord of Hosts; and though not one fourth of them are in attendance on the worship of the Most High; though not a fourth of them are awed by the declarations of his mouth; yet still Jehovah is their God, and the God of all their nation: they acknowledge no other: and they never think of bowing at any idol's fane. You first opened your eyes amid the splendours of this heaven-descended light; you drew your earliest breath in a Christian atmosphere: and like the light of

heaven, and the ambient air, and every other permanent and common good, you think meanly of the blessing because you never knew the want of it, and because your minds are so familiarized with the sight of its diffusion.

Would you perceive how this theme towers amid all those ascriptions of lofty adoration? Then your thoughts must travel back through a period of almost three thousand years; and from your native-country, and from Christian Europe, they must be suffered to wing their way to that little strip of territory that binds the Mediterranean's extremest eastern wave. There take note of Solomon, the son of the psalmist David, surrounded by the elders and chieftains of all the tribes of Israel. Mark the solemnity and deep interest that sits on every countenance! Hear the thunder of their praises, when with universal voice they raise the sacred anthem, "arise, O Jehovah, into thy rest; thou and the ark of thy strength." Take measure of that pile, whose turrets cleave the clouds, and the splendours of whose garniture have been the wonder of all ages. See that prince, who exacted homage from tributary kings, how in the sight of all the people he falls upon his knees, and spreads forth his hands, and professes himself the suppliant of a greater than Solomon, as humble a dependant, as completely a dependant, as the meanest of all creatures.

What mean those rites, that so abase the worshipper? To whom are they consecrating that stupendous edifice? No rites of cruelty and impurity are there. No monstrous idol, the terror and shame of man, rears its huge bulk within those sacred walls. This is a nation that has Jehovah for its God; and these people he has chosen for his own inheritance. He chose them for himself; "he shewed his

word unto Jacob, and his statutes and judgments unto Israel." And therefore it is that they consecrate a temple to the name of the Lord of Hosts. Look around now upon the nations under the whole face of heaven, and see if you can find one of them so blessed as this people. To none of them—no not one of them—has the Eternal "shewed his word;" and destitute of a revelation from "the excellent glory," "his statutes and his judgments" are utterly unknown to them. In the temples of the heathen, Dagon and Ashtaroth stretch their scaly length; a man or woman in the upper parts, in the nether extremities a serpent or a fish. And Moloch, "horrid king," impure and pitiless as Juggernaut's black idol, extends his molten arms to encircle the writhing victim,—the human victim roasting, literally *roasting*, in his grasp. Egypt, the mother of science, worships reptiles and vegetables: astronomic Babylon teems forth her learned multitudes to bow to graven images in the plain of Dura: in the east and in the west "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people." In the colleges of the priesthood, in the schools of philosophy, ignorance and impurity and cruelty abound. Their deities are local, their power limited, their tempers unholy, their actions often devilish. Such in its best condition was the theology of paganism. Such it continued to be even after that the dispersion of multitudes of Jews, with the scriptures in their hands, among the pagan nations, had led the more reflecting of their scholars to attempt the correction of their corrupt mythology. Such it still is among nations wholly pagan. Every solemnity is a tissue of impurity: every temple a very charnal house: every fancied Deity like a "a goblin damn'd."

Who can bear to contrast the magnificence of the Crea-

tor, his holiness, his goodness, his all-controlling providence, with abortions such as these!—Who will call in question the obvious bearings of these most dissimilar creeds and solemnities upon the individual feelings, social character and eternal destinies of men!—And who, that can discriminate between the light and glory of a Jewish anthem and a heathen's orgies, will refuse to lift high his pæan with our psalmist: "Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance"! Theirs was the religion that elevated the affections, expanded the mind, and ennobled the whole character: for the bible was their directory, and Jehovah was their God. Nor need we other proof that the inspiration of the Highest dictated the scriptures, than the simple fact that three thousand years—years which have unlocked ten thousand stores of science, and mightily furthered the march of human intellect,—have nevertheless added nothing to that knowledge of the Deity which David and Solomon could boast. Nothing but God's bible has ever conducted human footstep to the temples of his holiness; or taught one of all the nations to cast their miserable idols to the moles and to the bats.

Children of the Gentiles,—You take Jehovah for your God. You acknowledge that "an idol is nothing." But we fear that too many of you know but little of that bible which rescued your fathers from the dominion of those idols. You study the Deity whom you acknowledge but by reflected lights. You do not seem to be aware that they are reflected lights; that it was the bible shot the beam; and that the ideas which you have collected from the page of science, and from disquisitions on philosophy, the ideas which education made familiar to your child-

hood, the ideas which seem the spontaneous dictates of your reason,—You do not, we say, appear to be aware that all these are but portions of that heaven-transmitted beam, variously and partially and dimly reflected, while it darts in all its strength but from the page of inspiration. Thus you study the Deity by reflected lights, by partial lights, by insufficient lights, by lights which take their colouring from the nature of the object whence they are reflected, and depend alike for their momentum and their quantity on its suitableness or disposition to display any thing of God; and the light which has emanated directly from himself, and which alone has led the nations to discover in other things the impress of his Deity—that light, by which he professes to display himself, you neglect or undervalue, as teaching nothing of importance. Hence the discrepancy between the God of modern philosophy and the Deity of the bible. Philosophy, Prometheus-like, has stolen her fires from heaven; but her imbecility prohibits her, and her perverseness disinclines her, from wielding the element in its native force and purity. To the bible delineations she dare not boast of adding any thing; but her audacity and impiety have taken very much away. Hence too your little reverence for the character of the Deity:—You do not, no you do not, discern him as he is. Hence the disregard with which you treat his institutions. Hence your inattention to the claims of his supremacy.

Come, then, and see the glory of the Lord of Hosts, who “rideth upon the heaven of heavens which were of old:” whose “excellency is over Israel, and whose strength is in the clouds.” Come learn from an age in which mind was in its infancy, and from a people whom you are accustomed to regard as semi-barbarous,—not what they had discov-

ered, but—what the inspiration of his Eternal Spirit had taught them concerning the Most High.

In this prayer of Solomon, at the dedication of the temple, you may note the recognition of many of the attributes of God: His omnipresence,* his omniscience,§ his almighty power,‡ his infinite mercy,† his unalterable truth,|| his eternal dominion,¶ his all-directing providence,** are not only adverted to as points well understood, but are made the foundation of the suppliant's plea, and regarded as the anchor of his and Israel's hope. Any one of these would furnish a theme more than sufficient to occupy the efforts of our hour. And to no more than one of them do we propose at this time directing your attention.

You have remarked the humble and grateful spirit with which the king of Israel recounted God's predictions to his father, and the fidelity with which they were accomplished in his own person and behalf, as witnessed by the imposing solemnities of that hour. To David it had been said, when it was his purpose to build a temple to the Lord of Hosts, that he should not do it; but that one of his sons should occupy his throne, and fulfill the purpose which he had so worthily framed. And now, said Solomon, "the Lord hath performed his word that he spake; and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit upon the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel." He then proceeds to frame his supplication, in the most humble and reverential terms, that God would be pleased to accept that offering of his people Israel, and occupy the house

* 1 Kings viii. 27. § *Ibid.* 29, 39. † *Ibid.* 42. ‡ *Ibid.* 23, 35, || *Ibid.* 20, 24. ¶ *Ibid.* 60. ** *Ibid.* *passim.*

which they had founded for his name. But ere he had shaped his wish into expression, he appears suddenly to check himself, and adverting to the immensity of the Being whom he addressed, "will God," he cried, "indeed dwell on the earth! Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded." And then he goes on to supplicate that the eyes of the Lord might be continually on his temple, and that many blessings might result from his peculiar presence there.—Behold then "the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven, and in his excellency on the sky"! Behold the OMNIPRESENT God.

It was a proud distinction in behalf of Israel's God over the ten thousand fabled deities of paganism, and over the various sensible objects of their worship, that while the latter were considered as present in but one particular place, and even in dominion restricted to particular countries, or territories, or cities; the empire of Jehovah was always regarded as comprehending all things, and his eternal Deity as limited to no place, and circumscribed by no boundary, but really, immediately, and *wholly* present to every point of space, and to every created object, the universe abroad. Solomon therefore invoked a present Deity, the Deity whose immensity fills heaven, earth and hell, or rather, in whose immensity heaven, earth and hell have place, when he besought his special presence in that house of prayer. No place, he says, can hold the essence of the Most High, "the heavens cannot contain thee," that amazing expanse that towers high above our heads, that stretches every where around us, and within whose amazing limits creation wheels her fires. Nor can "the heaven of heavens" contain thee, the wide expanse which

stretches interminably beyond the material frame of things: that space (if space it be) in which glorious spirits expatiate at large: or into whose recesses nothing created has ever penetrated, and where nothing but the Deity has place. Thou art there, thou art here; creation floats around in the bosom of thy immensity; thou art at home where never yet were stretched the golden compasses to circumscribe the paths of new created worlds, and where strong pinioned seraphs, moving rapid as the light, could never—never come. ‘What am I, what are we,’ says the awe-struck king of Israel, ‘that I should ask thy presence in this temple, built by human hands!’

You will at once discern, my dear fellow mortals, that the theme which we have chosen is one which no human faculties can wield; and that were we even gifted with supernatural strength to mount to the height of such an argument, your feet could never follow us. But we come not with the aim to make you comprehend the omnipresence of the Deity. We only come to shew you that he is the omnipresent God, and that you cannot hope to comprehend his essence. Do not however suppose that a theme too mighty for our powers to wield, or for your faculties to grasp, is of a description that for that reason ought not to be attempted. Do not, before you have heard us, begin to frame your conjectures that our subject must prove uninteresting, because it is unfathomable; and that you cannot hope to learn any thing where we leave every thing unexplained. Were a novice to be told of the vastness of God’s works, and then were you to lead him forth for the purpose of ocular demonstration, would he have a right to complain of you because his eye could not take in their amazing compass? Would he be learning nothing

from you when you pointed him to objects of such prodigious extent that neither you nor he could descry their termination? Suppose him destitute of all knowledge of our world; and that after telling him of those mighty congregations of waters which separate our continents, you should propose to lead him forth, that on the ocean's beach he might test for himself the truth of your instructions. He expected perhaps that you would point out on every hand the amazing limits by which its waves are stayed: he expected that his eye would take measure of those abysses which, as he heard from you, are tenanted by the monsters of the deep. But he is sadly disappointed. You lead him to the beach where ocean lifts her everlasting voice, and he sees nothing of those limits, those amazing limits, which he had expected to descry. You then conduct him to some eminence, to enlarge the circle of his vision: but it is confusion worse confounded. Here,! yonder,! directly under his feet the billows dash and foam! Afar his eye discerns the surges as they sweep! But it is a world of waters, an interminable waste; no boundary or bottom can he see. As well might such a novice complain that he had learned nothing, because you did not scoop the ocean in the hollow of your hand, and bid his eye then trace its limits and penetrate its depths, as that you, or other mortals, should complain that we attempt too much when we point you to a Divinity "too high to comprehend."

God is omnipresent: "heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him." If we cannot frame our speech to speak things unutterable, if we cannot by examples furnish illustrations of an object which has no pallel in all the universe of being, our text will at least serve to remove erroneous notions on this subject, and to shield you from

the mischiefs inseparable from all attempts to shadow forth an image of the Deity. God is omnipresent: he fills heaven and earth. Then,

I. We are forbidden to conceive of the Deity as existing in human, or any bodily form. We are perfectly aware that to many of our hearers this caution may seem superfluous. You have been taught from childhood to consider that "God is a spirit," and that "a spirit hath not flesh and bones;" and you are therefore ready to assert that no person who reads the bible, no person in fact within the bounds of Christendom, can be supposed sottish enough to indulge such gross conceptions of the Divinity. You are deceived. It is one thing to distinguish in words between a spiritual and corporeal existence, and quite another and much more rare atchievment to form distinct and correct apprehensions of spiritual being. We have every reason to believe that a great proportion of those who employ the terms spirit, essence, and such like, attach to them no other notion than that of substances, highly refined, indeed, and attenuated, but nevertheless extended, bounded by superficies, and in every respect as material as those most palpable to sense. This is by no means an unusual mode of conceiving of angelic beings, and of the immortal spirits of men. Nor is it strange that human language, founded as it is for the most part on sensible objects, and so universally employed in shadowing forth by imagery our conceptions of spiritual things, should both suggest and foster these erroneous apprehensions. We habitually speak of spirits *standing* before God's throne, *bowing* before God's throne, or winging their way from before the throne of God on some errand of judgment or mercy; and we never do so without representing them, and in some sort conceiv-

ing of them, as corporeal existences cast in mortal mould. This imperfection, not to call it by a stronger term, is inseparable from human language, and probably, during the continuance of our present mode of existence, from human thought itself. It is not therefore strange, however lamentable it be, that the same misapprehension should lead us astray in our attempts to form conceptions of that Eternal and Infinite Spirit who presides over the affairs of men. We know well that the Deity has sometimes been regarded in that very light: as a being extended, moulded in human form, actually seated on a splendid throne, and arrayed in all the habiliments of material existences. And we know that the time has been, when unholy superstition sanctioned and extended this enormous error by pictures—by *pictures* of the Infinite One!—planted in churches for the adoration of Christian worshippers!! It is not therefore a needless caution to bid you beware of conceiving of the Deity as if he existed in human form, or indeed under any form. Infinite wisdom has deemed this caution profitable to men of various ages. We find Moses the man of God, warning Israel on that subject in that long and most interesting address with which he closed his ministry. “On the day,” says he, “that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb—the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.” And again he bids them beware, “lest they should corrupt themselves, and make a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female.” “For ye saw,” he says, “no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Ho-

reb, out of the midst of the fire." God was there: He saw you; he spoke to you: for he is the omnipresent God. But ye saw no "similitude," no shape, no substance distinguished and defined by surfaces. He is a Spirit, the Infinite Spirit. To attempt resemblances of him, is only to misrepresent him and to corrupt yourselves.

The apostle Paul, in like manner, did not deem it a waste of words to warn the learned Greeks, the inhabitants of Athens the famous seat of science, against the indulgence of these gross conceptions. In his discourse on the altar which they had erected "to the unknown God," he deemed it needful to instruct them that "God that made the world and all things therein—dwelleth not in temples made with hands." He confirmed the suggestion by adverting to the doctrine of my text, the doctrine of the omnipresence of God. "He is not far from every one of us," says Paul, "for in him we live and move and have our being." God is the underived existence, the immense reality, and creation does not merely owe its origin to him; *in* him, as well as *from* him, all living things have life and motion; and *in him* all things, animate and inanimate, subsist. "We ought not" then, he concludes, "to think that the Godhead is like to gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device:" that is, 'we ought not to think that the Deity exists in human form, like those pretended resemblances of him which men in their ignorance and impiety prepare from metals or from marble. God is immense: all creation lives in him: he is the omnipresent God.' "To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" "It is high as heaven, what canst thou know? Deeper than hell, what canst thou

do? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

We might adduce still stronger instances to prove that infinite wisdom does not deem this caution needless. Witness the reiterated complaints of the psalmist David, that the men of Israel themselves, multitudes who had their allotment in the congregation of the Most High, nevertheless conceived of him as of a being altogether like themselves: undertook to assert that he had changed the place of his abode; that "the Lord had forsaken the earth, neither did the God of Jacob any more regard it." Witness also the challenge of the Most High in relation to his own corrupted priesthood. During the solemnities of public worship, during the two weeks in which they served by rotation in the temple of the Lord, they cautiously abstained from their criminal courses. Wherefore?—They were in the temple. There was the holy of holies! there, within it, stood the ark of the covenant and the Mercy seat! there, upon the Mercy seat, and between the cherubim, dwelt the shekinah, that inexplicable, that transcendent, that awe-inspiring brightness by which, like the pillar of fire in the wilderness, the Deity symbolized his presence in the temple. In that awful place, before the presence of that glory, the most licentious of the priesthood dared not indulge in their enormities. But the moment they gave place to their successors in the service, and, leaving the city and the temple and the shekinah, retired to their respective houses, all those considerations which served only to repress but not to annihilate their propensities, immediately gave way. "Am I," said the Most High in his message to those unhallowed ministers, "Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off?" Is it only from the mercy

seat I can take notice of your conduct, should you commit your shameful deeds within the area of my temple and before my flaming altars? Is it only in the light of the shekinah, whose glory illumines the recesses of the temple, that your consciences shrink from the perpetration of enormities? Am I not God afar off from the temple, as well as beside its altars? Am I not there, where no shekinah darts its splendours, the unseen spectator of your most hidden deeds? "Can any hide himself in secret places that I cannot see him? saith the Lord: do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord."* The shekinah attested God's presence in the temple: it spoke to the senses in a way not to be controverted. But it did not tell the worshipper that he is therefore absent, where he does not address the senses. The shekinah was an emanation from the "light that is inaccessible;" and like the hoarse billow that lifts its awful voice to tell of the grandeur of the "vasty deep," but is not itself the ocean, the shekinah witnessed the reality of the uncreated light, but was by no means to be regarded as the fullness of its glory.

God is not in human form: no circumference bounds his incomparable essence: He is every where.

In proving to you that the correction of this error is not needless, we have also endeavoured to interweave sufficient proof that it really is an error—an enormous error: an error which not only fastens upon those who adopt it the guilt of gross idolatry, but which also fosters in them the worst dispositions of the human heart.

Do not now think of telling us, in the face of all these proofs, that still the scriptures seem to countenance the er-

* *Jer.* xxiii. 23, 24.

ror we are combatting: that they speak often and familiarly of the hands, the feet, the eyes, the ears of God; and, in one word, array him in all the attributes and habiliments common or appropriate to human form. Do not suppose you have found a contradiction to our text, when you read that man was created in the image of his maker; and that Moses, who must have well understood his nature, petitioned to see his face. You are too well acquainted with the nature of human language and of human thought to regard it as a novel suggestion when we tell you that we both speak and think in a highly figurative style; and that if deprived of this resource, we should be unable to form any conception of many interesting objects, and be entirely destitute of expressions to convey ideas which we could clearly frame. Of course a revelation from God, if adapted to instruct us, must be made to us in language we are accustomed to employ, and his thoughts must be couched in figures which we are accustomed to decypher.—But let the scriptural use of these expressions be called in to correct the abuse to which you would subject them. ‘God has hands:’—What then? ‘He of course subsists in human form.’ But they are hands in the hollow of which he holds the ocean: they are fingers with which he grasps the sun and stars, “and taketh up the isles as a very little thing.” God has eyes: but they scan immeasurable distances. They do more: they survey all spiritual existences. They do more still: they search the very hearts, and try the thoughts of the children of men, and indeed of all intelligences.—God has ears: but they hear when no sound is uttered; they hear the very groaning of the heart.—God has feet: but they reach to earth, while he fills heaven as his throne. What other proof would you demand that all

such expressions are mere accommodations to human modes of speech, and are so far from being calculated to mislead our thoughts, that they afford our clearest glimpses of the omnipresent God? In like manner, the image of God in which our nature was created, and the face of God which Moses wished to see, are respectively and very frequently adverted to in scripture as designating in the one case the unclouded intellect and moral rectitude of man; and in the other the sensible manifestations of the Divine glory. Man bore his maker's image when his unclouded intellect and unfolding loveliness furnished a dim miniature of that boundless understanding and transcendent excellence that adorns the uncreated mind. And man then is said to see the face of God, when, apart from sense and all the things of sense, his spirit is brought into contact with the Infinite One, so as to perceive and apprehend him as spirit discerns spirit, and to commune with him as man, "face to face," holds converse with his friend.

But,

II. There is another error to which we are prone to betake ourselves, when convinced of the absurdity of imputing to the Deity a corporeal form. We figure to ourselves an ethereal substance, as some are pleased to call it, transfused throughout the universe—throughout unlimited space, and fraught with all the faculties and powers ascribable to the Supreme. Thus the Deity is assumed to be extended, as space is extended; and he is supposed to fill immensity, as ether or any still more subtil fluid might be said to fill it. But is this the God of Solomon, whom "heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain"? Does he transcend high heaven; does he spread abroad through the universe, as light is diffused from the surface of the

sun, transcends the orbits of the planets, and urges its yellow tide to the uttermost bounds of the visible creation? No, this cannot be the meaning of our text. For,

1st. It would follow that if the Deity be thus diffusive in his essence, he could have no proper personality; he could not be said to be present to any place. A part of him would be here: a part of him on high, beyond the orbits of the planets: a part of him extended among the remotest stars: and the greater proportion lost in that immeasurable void that lies without the space through which creation sweeps. What a monstrous idea of personality is this! Who should endure to think of a part of God being in one place, and a part of him in another! Who sees not the absurdity of infinite power, infinite knowledge, infinite condescension extended through a subject; and a part of these in one place, and a part of them in another! Who does not *feel* that when the scriptures speak of God as present in any place, he is to be regarded as being *wholly* though not exclusively there! But.

2dly. We have a still more conclusive argument against this fancy of extension. "God is a spirit:" and a spirit is not extended: it has no relation to space: nothing to do with parts. Extension, figure, divisibility, are properties of matter. And though you refine it as you please, though you put imagination on the rack to shape conceptions of an essence subtil—impalpable, beyond the powers of human speech, yet you have still the idea of **BODY**, extended, bounded, divisible without end. If you resume the process, you can effect nothing more than to imagine corporeal substance still more attenuated: its essence is still particles of insensate matter: and their activity is limited to combinations and movements. What is there in all this

like intelligent perception, or like moral sentiment? What is there like thought or feeling? like judgment or volition? Of the essence of matter we nevertheless know nothing. We conceive of it only by its operations and properties. Judge of spirit by the same rule. Do not attempt to shape conceptions of its essence: attend only to its properties and operations. I feel, I think, I love, I abhor. Who is not conscious that these acts of mind have nothing in common with the operations of matter? *Extension, figure, motion*:—put these in the one scale. *Consciousness, perception, volition*:—place them in the other. What have they in common? What can there be common to the substances in which they are found to exist? All our difficulties and mistakes on this subject result from the strange fact that the Deity has united these amazing extremes in our own persons. We are immortal spirits wrapped in material organs: and almost all our perceptions and sensations are derived to us through the medium of sense, and *from* material objects. Hence we cannot separate, even in idea, between *merely percipient* and *extended* existence. It seems to us as if where body is not, there is nothing. The secret of this deception is to be found in a strong and perhaps unavoidable association of ideas. We contemplate an object near at hand. It is the immortal spirit that does so; but it does it through the medium of material organs, and by the aid of that material fluid which we denominate light. Now these material organs sustain various relations to the object contemplated, in common with all other matter: they have an adjustment in space with relation to it and to other bodies: they occupy a place nearer at hand or more remote from it: they must move in order to act upon it. And as it is the mind which perceives and oper-

ates through these organs, it identifies itself and its own energies, with the organs through which it acts, and by which it perceives; and consequently seems itself to be adjusted with surrounding bodies, and to move in space.

Again, suppose the object to be very remote. Our only information is derived through the eye, which catches a few of the diverging rays. In order that the mind may perceive it more clearly, and much more, in order that it may operate upon it, we know that we must approach. In doing so we both occupy time and pass through space. Hence again, as it is the spirit that directs the process, and gathers its information during that process, we associate the ideas of space and place with the perceptions of spiritual beings, and attribute to them the relations which in truth are only sustained by the organs through which they act.

But suppose yourselves for a moment unembodied beings. If you have not that material organ which we call the eye, then you have no need of that fluid by which the eye is enabled to discern. You do not of course approach an object that your visual powers may catch more abundant rays. The spirit itself contemplates the object in its own peculiar way. Dimness has no place where light has no bearing; and, of course, every thing like distance, and intervening space, and change of situation, must be stricken out of the account. The mind perceiving objects without any regard to such process or relations may then glance "from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven," and from one extremity of the universe to the other, as thought now glances, without any thing like motion, and without that successive effort—that succession in point of time; which marks progressive motion.

We by no means pretend to say that an unembodied spirit must be insensible to the relations of bodies, or the progress of their movements. We only say that it can in no sense be affected by or implicated in these relations and adjustments. It may readily perceive their relations to one another, their existence in space, their progressive movement, without itself occupying space or sharing any of their relations. It may even share in the control of them, and call forth all its energies in relation to their movements, without involving the supposition that it occupies a place among them, or participates in their extension, or accompanies their movements. What are the attributes of spirit? what evinces its existence? what constitutes its activities?—It perceives: it reflects: it feels: it wills. But perception is not motion: reflection is not form: feeling is not extension: space and volition have nothing in common. Our perceptions and reflections, and feelings and volitions not only *may be*, but actually *are* often occupied without the remotest reference to materiality or any of its relations. They are employed about abstract truths, about moral sentiments, and about a variety of other objects which it were useless to specify. They might be thus occupied as readily, were it possible that we existed alone in the universe of God, and so had no conception of bodily forms, or extended spaces, or movements slow or rapid. These exercises do not change their nature when they change their object. As little does the being whose exercises they are, and whose nature they declare. Amid the expansive universe it exists unextended. Amid the movements of all nature it operates without moving.

If all this be true of created intelligences, even of intelligences immersed in matter, how much more clearly may

it be asserted of the Creator that he is a simple unextended existence!

But all this, you are ready to tell me, does not lead you one step toward a correct apprehension of the Divine omnipresence. You wish to know how the Supreme Being exists, if he does not exist throughout extended space: You wish to form at least a faint conception of that mysterious presence which it is your duty to realize. My brethren, we did not undertake to discover to you things unsearchable. We should deserve your contempt and abhorrence, not your attention and confidence, did we even propose to meddle with things too high to understand. We know nothing of the mode in which any unembodied or disembodied spirit exists and operates: why should a mortal then think of entering on such enquiries? If you have been so happy as to correct any of your misapprehensions on this subject, that of itself has been a great achievement; and it is almost every thing which we could hope to do.

There are, however, one or two considerations that may be named, as throwing some additional light—all the light we are able to furnish—on the subject of spiritual existence.

You will readily grant the assumption formerly made, that even in the case of spirits united to organized bodies, it is the spirit that perceives, and feels and acts, and not those bodily organs which are the seat of its operations. Thus, for example, it is not the eye that sees, or the ear that hears; but it is the intelligent inhabitant which sees and hears through the medium of the impressions made on these organs. Suppose then these organs removed, and the tenant of flesh uncased, so that all impressions were made

directly on itself, without the aid of any medium. Then it would follow, that as the whole spirit sees, and hears and feels through the medium of any one sense, so it must see, and hear and feel, or receive any other impressions made upon it without the intervention of such media. Then you have a being who is all perception: all eye, all ear, all tact. And you at once pronounce this being to be present to every thing which it perceives and every thing which it influences, as you account yourself present to every thing which falls immediately under your eye, or which you handle and control. Thus then spirit is present to spirit, when they mingle thoughts and feelings. Spirits are present to body when they contemplate or control it. They are present to all things which directly excite or affect their perceptions, as body is present to all that directly excites or affects sensation.

Once more. As all the various degrees of sensation depend on the perfection or defect of the bodily organs, or on the momentum of the impression, or on the quality of the medium through which it is conveyed; it is plain that none of these things can affect the impressions made on spiritual beings; consequently, in their mere perceptions there are nothing like degrees. Whatever they see, they see distinctly. Whatever they hear, they hear perfectly. Whatever they feel, they feel exquisitely. Wheresoever they are present, they are *intimately* present.

‘But,’ it may be said—‘but if these are the attributes of unembodied spirits, it would seem to follow that *all* of them, *all finite spirits*, are also omnipresent: For they do not occupy space—their existence has no relation to it,—and they are “all eye, all ear, all tact.”—The inference is not sound. Recur to our first principle. Unembodied

spirits both perceive and influence objects *directly*, without the intervention of material organs; and *immediately*, without the aid of any interposing medium. It therefore unquestionably does follow that they may take a very rapid survey of God's wide empire, and become intimately acquainted with the condition of his works. To one, and then another, and another they may turn, and be intimately present to them, without change of place, and with the rapidity of thought. And accordingly we do find intimations in scripture that happy spirits know all that is transacting in heaven and earth and hell. And even the tenants of the pit have glimpses of heaven's happiness and glory. Thus the rich man saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. And Abraham could talk to him about the misery of his state. But this is not omnipresence: it is nothing like omnipresence. To be omnipresent is *at once* to perceive all things, and act upon all things. To this the tallest seraph advances no pretensions. Created minds are limited in the exercise of their powers. No two things can at the same instant occupy thought or engage effort. Multiplicity distracts, confounds, paralyzes. God only possesses the Infinite Understanding. All things are sustained by him—in him. He therefore sees all, directs all, controls all. He only can be regarded as the OMNIPRESENT spirit.

Of what service then are our remarks on the presence of created spirits? They are intended to promote in this particular respect the same effect which all the attributes of created being are employed in producing:—they are intended to furnish a faint and partial adumbration of the *presence* of that being whose "image," in other respects, creation reflects feebly. We cannot shew you God him-

self: we cannot throw aside the "clouds and darkness" which constitute "his pavilion," and say to you 'behold the omnipresent God.' We can partly tell you how created spirits are present, and faintly as they bear, in every respect, his "image," we can say "lo! these are parts of his ways." To give you any conception even of created vastness, we must have recourse to a similar method. Suppose we would have you form conceptions of the vast extent of creation. High-sounding epithets—all-grasping adjectives would shed no light upon our path. We would first take you to some object—stupendous indeed, but nevertheless of such dimensions that the eye could scale its heights, and the mind grasp its circumference. Let it be for example some snow cap't mountain whose summit cleaves "the lazy pacing clouds." You would gaze with trepidation at the amazing height to which it lifts its awful head. Around its ample base the cultivated fields, and wide spreading lawns would almost seem to invite you to take their dimensions with a span: Magnific castles, and mountain rocks just dot it sloping heights like flocks of speckled birds: Its yawning abysses seem like highways to earth's centre; and its thundering cascades appear to shake the poles. O how pitiful, you cry, are the mightiest works of man when placed in competition with the works of God! What is there—what is there under the whole face of heaven so awfully magnificent, so unutterably vast as this amazing pile. Its precipices mount to heaven; its abysses lead down to the realms of ancient night; in its compass there is a vastness which no language can express.—Earth, then! what is earth! Her broad surface is studded with thousands of such mountains. And could you take your station at some distance, and see her as she

wends her annual round, and spinning on her axis, turns in succession all her broad oceans and continents to the sun—your mountains would at once lose all their character of vastness; they would shrink; they would disappear; they would not roughen her vast surface; the mightiest chain that frowns across her continents would be but as a molehill on the sides of Chimborazo.—And your world, with all its mountains, and continents and oceans, were it to plunge toward the sun, would be an atom on its surface. Should it lie among its mountains or float upon its lava, it would be undistinguished as a pebble or a pumice stone. And what is your sun but an atom in creation! And what the material universe but a point in immensity! God fills immensity. God only is great. We but chatter when we give these swelling titles to any of his works.

Judge then as you can of the omnipresence of the Deity. We have no language to express it—no faculties to conceive of it. By the presence of body, and of unembodied spirits, by things which we know or of which we can imagine something, we would lead you to a faint apprehension of God's omnipresence; as mountains, worlds and systems lead you step by step to catch a glimpse of that immensity which is "unspeakable, unknown."

Take then the apostle Paul's idea, to which we have already adverted. God is the great reality—the only stable and undervived existence. Matter is less stable; it arose from nothing; God sustains it in being, and were the cause to cease the effect must cease; were he to cease upholding, it would cease to be. Created spirit is less stable; it once was not; it has life only in God's life; and were he to retire into himself, it too would cease to be. "He is not far from every one of us," says Paul: "for in him we live

and move and have our being." *He* is not said to be *in* all things, pervading all, surrounding all: but he is himself the prominent object, and all things are in him. He sustains all, observes all, actuates all, controls all. It is not change of place but change of condition that is to enable you to perceive his presence, to "see him as he is," to "behold him face to face," as happy spirits behold him. Your informations of objects come to you at present through the medium of sensation, and God is not an object of sensation. But could you, immortal spirits! at this moment throw off those pelicles of flesh that obstruct your clear perception,—behold at once you are in the presence of the Deity! You see him! You know him, as spirit knows spirit. And now, though you cannot discern him through those veils; yet he is here: he sees you: he hears me: in him we have life and breath and being. Hear Job, when he had lost the light of God's countenance, that only sensible manifestation of his presence which is ordinarily afforded to tenants of the flesh: "Oh, that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!—Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold." Hear David, hear the father of our Solomon: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about

me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Mysterious, awful presence! Well might the psalmist infer: "thou knowest my sitting down and my rising up; thou understandest my thoughts afar off." Well might he assert: "thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." Well might he exclaim: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." And *you—*you, my dear brethren, who are compassed like the psalmist, with this wonderful presence, will you not devoutly join him in the petition he puts up? If God be in this assembly. if he sees you, if he sustains you, if he is to judge you, will you not now say to him: "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"!

But we cannot tell you now of the ends to which you should employ these feeble glimmerings of knowledge.—For though our theme be mysterious, it is not therefore a useless one: The presence of the Most High is a most commanding thought; and our bare knowledge of it should lead us to many a deduction of stupendous import. All these we must defer till, if so please the present Deity, we meet you here again.

Communicants! You are about to take your places at the table of the Lord. Is it not, to you at least, an awful thought that the Lord is in this place! In his presence—before his very face, you are going, in a few moments, to stretch forth your hands and take the symbols of the Saviour's body and blood. He will see you! he will note

you! "Behold, the heavens are not clean in his sight, and he chargeth his angels with folly!" Does it seem to you, all defiled as you are, a fearful thing thus to pass in review before the living God? Do you fear lest your offences should now rise up in dark array before him and provoke him to curse you where you sit? O, no! O, no! That is not the turn you should give to these reflections. Your sins have already risen up before him. They stood before his face, in all their rankness, the very hour they were committed. And it is his own goodness—*his own goodness* that has provided for you this place of refuge, that the arrows of his justice might not rankle in your breasts. This, this is the place of a sinner's safety, and a communion hour his hour of jubilee. Behold the Saviour's body broken for the perishing! behold his blood poured out to release the guilty! Behold the grand experiment of heaven, whether miscreants can be fitted to stand like cherubs before his throne! And he invites the miserable, and the guilty and the abandoned to come and submit themselves to the process he has instituted! And you—you want if possible to share in this great mercy, and all helpless as you are, all hapless, all defiled, you come to submit yourselves to the process he has instituted! It is well, O, it is well that God is in this assembly. For he is here to aid you. He is here to do for you the thing that you desire. He will not—sure he will not suffer the experiment to fail in his own immediate presence. Make bare then your wounds before him; pour out your hearts before him; spread all your wants before him; tell him you are here because his bible bade you come. Cry, my Father! my Father! and see if he do not answer you, "Son, daughter, be of good cheer: thy sins be forgiven thee."

This is the use his bible teaches you to make of the doc-

trine of his omnipresence. Hear himself, how he wields it, after having contrasted his own immensity with the sculptured and molten images of paganism: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." And if God conduct those mighty orbs, so that not one of them falls short of the goal to which he destines it, shall his purpose falter, shall his power fail him, when he undertakes to conduct a sinful being back to the ways of righteousness! It may not be. If of all those glorious fires that bowl round the hill of heaven, "not one faileth," "for that *he* is strong in power," then "not one" of *you* shall fail, whose trust is in his mercy; for it was his own proposal to undertake your cure. Is this *our* inference, brethren?—the God of the bible says so:—"he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth. WHY SAYEST THOU, O JACOB, AND SPEAKEST, O ISRAEL, MY WAY IS HID FROM THE LORD, AND MY JUDGMENT IS PASSED OVER FROM MY GOD? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, Jehovah, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon Jehovah 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 God of salvation grant that you, my dearest brethren, may find it thus with you to-day! Amen.

SERMON II.

Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee.
1 Kings viii. 27.

It was a humiliating lesson which the Saviour on one occasion taught his disciples, when they were disputing, as they often did in no very dignified or amiable style, which of them should be "greatest in the kingdom of heaven." He "called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." You must utterly dismiss that pride of character, and that pertinacious adherence to your own opinions and preferences, which the mass of mankind consider it their right and glory to maintain: and taking your station humbly and quietly at the feet of Jesus Christ, you must conduct in the spirit of a little child, which never thinks of questioning the wisdom or truth of the parent whom it loves; and never permits the pride of opinion or the love of amusement to interfere with any of the instructions or commands which come to it under the sanction of an authority so venerated.

It was not, my dear brethren, for the disciples alone that this lesson was intended. An apostle has remarked that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope:" and as this assurance of

the Saviour's constitutes a part of that gospel of salvation which he has commanded should be published to all ages and nations, you are to consider Jesus Christ as addressing you to-day, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—It is "an hard saying; who can hear it?" Is that the comment of any one of you, when you hear this sentiment uttered by a tongue whose truth no man may question? It *was* the comment of many a professed follower of the Saviour when he was on earth, who on the strength of it drew back, and followed him no more. But *it must* be done, *it must* be submitted to, or the case is rendered desperate. Christianity never amalgamates with the opposite disposition. That audacious philosophy which arrogantly rejects the truths of revelation, because they are hostile to its reveries, or conversant with matters above its comprehension; and that paganizing theology which labours to bring them down to the standard of what it calls a *rational* christianity, are here upon a level. They who controvert them, and they who dilute or fritter them away, are equally strangers to the subduing power which the apostle Paul ascribes to the gospel of salvation, when it "casts down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

But are you perfectly sure that they are the most high-minded men and independent thinkers, who refuse to take the station of a little child; but rather presume to judge of the soundness of every principle indisputably contained in the oracles of God, and of the propriety of every ordinance enjoined by his authority, before they can admit it as a certain truth that he himself has spoken?—Are you

prepared to affirm that there is not much more of ignorance and presumption than of intelligence and dignity, in that affected superiority which professes to look down on all questions conversant about scriptural doctrines as things of little moment; and pities the weak credulity of him who believes a mystery; and despises the want of spirit in him who fulfills a precept?—*Do you* feel yourselves compelled to renounce your pretensions to every thing like liberalized and philosophic manhood, when you set yourselves to learn and obey as little children, in every thing that relates to the doctrines and duties of a christian?—Is it really “an hard saying” which Jesus Christ has uttered.

We are always happiest when it is our lot to rear the standard of the cross, “as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,” for attendant multitudes to look to and be healed, without calling in question the reality or the suitability of heaven’s own institutions. It is joy, it is blessedness which no earth-born thoughts can equal, when such immortals seat themselves in the sanctuary of God, that, with the simplicity of little children, they may learn and do his will; and when every eye and every movement seem to indicate that all hearts are labouring with one inquiry, ‘O, will he, *will he* save me?’—But next to the joy of soothing and thrilling such perturbed spirits, by unfolding for their help, in all its tenderness and brightness, “the glorious gospel of the blessed God,” and of leading them, all anxious and helpless as they are, to that merciful Redeemer who casts none away,—next to that most loved of all employments we feel happy in vindicating from unmerited aspersions the soundness of their discretion and the dignity of their procedure in submitting like children to the guidance of the Most High. And we feel happy in

making it out to self-styled philosophers, and self-admiring witlings, that in ridiculing or denouncing the doctrines of the bible, they are presuming upon points which they do not understand.

Nor is it hard to vindicate the submission of a christian, when he bows like an infant to the precepts of his religion; for it is to none but Jehovah, God of Hosts, that he submits unreservedly his understanding and his ways. Should man—weak man—undervalue him on this account, and stigmatize as folly the lessons gathered from the page of inspiration, the bible scholar will have learned enough of God and of the ways of God to put down the rude assailant. Before *him* he need not stand in the guise of simple infancy, but with arch-angelic port, while he triumphantly

“——— asserts eternal providence,
“And justifies the ways of God with men.”

It is our aim to accomplish both these objects in the present course. We would lead you if possible to some distinct apprehension of that august and awful being “in the presence of whose glory” happy spirits bow; that thus “beholding,” however faintly, “the glory of the Lord,” you may be “changed into the same image from glory to glory,” and learn to cherish more abiding sentiments than those to which the host of Israel gave a momentary entertainment, when they beheld his glory, and heard the voice of his thunders, and saw his lightnings glance, amid the smouldering clouds that swathed the peak of Horeb.—But we would do more than lead you to form that resolution which as with one mouth was announced by the congregation of the Lord: “all that the Lord our God hath spoken we will do.” We would not be content with witnessing your compliance with that leading requisition: “this is the

work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." We would have you prepared at all points to "give a reason of" *the faith*, as well as "hope that is in you," by making it out that the scriptures are worthy of all acceptation as a record of God's providence, and as a rule of faith and life; and that whatever they record of God and his ways, is consistent with his character and worthy of his supremacy, notwithstanding the objections so often and confidently urged.

And even now, though we have but just commenced our attempt to unfold to you the God of the bible, and though in one discourse no more has been effected than a feeble delineation of one of his high attributes, yet from this elevation, the first to which you have attained, shrouded as it is in clouds and darkness, you may trace very distinctly the bearing and connexion of many of those principles which confound the understandings of such as do not realize the "omnipresent God."

You recollect the view of the omnipresence of the Deity with which we endeavoured to impress you. God does not exist in a corporeal form: nor is he diffused through space, as any subtil, but still *material* substance might be spread abroad. He is a spirit; and he is every where. To every point of space, and to every created thing, he is intimately and *wholly* present, as if that point were immensity, and that single object the whole of his creation. Spaces and magnitudes have no relation to him. An atom is as the universe, and the universe as an atom: for all things subsist in his immensity, and they are "naked and open before him." He is, therefore, "not far from every one of us." If you "ascend up into heaven," he is there. If you "make your bed in hell," he is there. If you "take the

wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea," even there shall his hand lead you, and his right hand shall hold you. He is *really, immediately, and wholly* present in every place: "the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him." But he is not *merely* present, as the spectator of all that is and of all that is done. All things "live and move and have their being" in him. The same energy that produced, upholds them in existence; and apart from him they would instantly cease to be.

This is the scriptural representation of omnipresence. We did not attempt to explain it to you. We dare not attempt it. We rest satisfied with putting it beyond the possibility of doubt that this *is* the scriptural account. And you—without pretending to comprehend the thing at all—at once recognize the description as appropriate, and admit that it is the only appropriate delineation of an Infinite Being. THEN, we would say to you,

I. If God is every where, and if all things subsist in him, what becomes of the fashionable objection to the scriptures that they reveal many things which no creature can comprehend; and that as a wise being would not take that mode of instructing his creatures, the scriptures evince themselves not be of God?—

To this notion we will oppose the doctrine of our text, the doctrine of God's omnipresence. Philosophy never discovered it. While "darkness yet covered the earth," the schools of philosophy never revolved the thought of an omnipresent being. All, with them, was local, limited, and in every sense material. Even *spirit*, as they called it, was but attenuated matter. But the moment that revelation brought the truth to light, it was admitted and incorporated into every system that could advance any pre-

tensions to common sense or science. Within the bounds of Christendom no system is inculcated which involves a different construction of the presence of the Deity; and there is no philosopher, however antichristian, who would not blush to utter any other sentiment. Though then the idea be purely of revelation, yet none but pagans, or such beings as cherish the ignorance of pagans without being entitled to plead the same apology, ever think of admitting any other conception. The thing is true: it has the sanction of common sense, however inscrutable it be.—*Then*, we again repeat it, what becomes of the objection so often leveled at the scriptures, on the ground that they reveal things utterly incomprehensible? God is incomprehensible; yet they have revealed *him*,—revealed him to many nations “who had changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like unto corruptible man.” His omnipresence is incomprehensible; yet they have revealed that, and made it the ground of many an awful warning and salutary hope. His power is incomprehensible; yet they have revealed that, and point you to the whole universe as the witness of its extent.

The assumption that because the scriptures reveal things incomprehensible, they cannot be of God, appears to rest on one of two grounds; both of which are equally untenable. It supposes either that nothing can exist which is above human comprehension; and therefore that the revelation of such existences proves the falsity of the record: Or it assumes that it can be of no use to us to be informed of the existence of things incomprehensible; and that therefore the attempt to reveal them proves the folly of him who makes it.

Need we say to you that both these positions are utter-

ly false? You will admit nothing to be credible that you cannot comprehend! Will you then believe in God? that he sees you? that he hears you? that he made you? that he upholds you?—Will you believe in your own existence? that you see? that you hear? that you stretch forth your hands at will?—Will you believe in the existence, or in the operations of any other creature?—What is spirit? what is matter? how do they exist? on what principle do they put forth their energies?—God—God only can tell. He made all things: he upholds all things: he comprehends them fully: and in this, as in every other respect, he stands alone. We neither comprehend him, nor ourselves, nor any thing that exists. Some facts we have been taught in relation to him: some facts with respect to ourselves we fully know: some facts are obvious in relation to things around us. But all that we can gather amounts to no more than faint notices of existence—a multitude of existences—unsearchable in their nature, and unsearchable in their operations.

All things live in God; all things are of God; all things bear the stamp of his inscrutable counsels and omnific hand: and there lives not, there exists not, within the circuit of creation, a thing so mean or simple as would not dash the intellect of the mightiest seraph, had he the folly to aspire at comprehending its existence. It is wisdom to discern the limits of a creature's knowledge; and that man gives the strongest evidence of the extent to which his industry has carried his researches, and of the ability and discretion with which he has conducted them, who has learned to regard the discovery of every new fact as the discovery of a new wonder which he cannot fathom; and when the sum of his attainments has just served to teach

him that all our knowledge is the knowledge of things unsearchable, and that the amount of what we do know, compared with that which is inscrutable, is as a drop of water to the mighty ocean. It was the adoption of this principle, that nothing is credible which we cannot comprehend, which rendered atheism so prevalent in the schools of antiquity. Attempting to reason on the nature and necessity of a first cause, they speedily found themselves beyond their depth. From a situation so perilous to the interests of self-sufficiency they retreated with all haste: And sagaciously concluding that nothing *could be*, which eluded their penetration, they inferred that there could of course be no first cause: all things came by chance; or (by chance!) they were eternally in their present situation. Need we say to you that the same assumption might just as reasonably have lead them to doubt of every thing? In fact it did so. The more consistent among them carried out their principle. They sought to study themselves, to comprehend the whole creation: and at the very first step they met a gulf impassible. They were a mystery to themselves: all creation was a mystery: mind was incomprehensible: matter was incomprehensible: and all antiquity boasts the profundity of the men—the philosophers—the whole schools and sets of philosophers who not only called in question the reality of every thing around them, and of every act which they saw; but questioned their own existence! and of course, we should presume, the existence of their own fond theory!

Many of the moderns who arrogate to themselves the title of philosophers, arrive at the same goal by a route which has the semblance of greater plausibility and incomparably greater learning, but possesses, in fact, far less of the

merit of consistency than that to which we have been adverting. They profess by the aid of chemistry and physics, of mathematics and metaphysics, to have arrived at the first principles and ultimate causes of all things, and have thus discovered that all things can exist and move on, and how they exist and move on, without the intervention of any foreign cause. Of course there *is* none! there is no God! they have penetrated to the very bottom of things; and they have discovered none. Have they so? And what then is matter? And what is mind? And what are those grand principles which we call the laws of matter? And in what consists the energies of mind? They are mistaken. They can account for nothing. The few laws of being which they have traced, the few facts which they have discovered, leave the main secret of all existences as much in the dark as ever. What enstamped these laws on being? whence the connexion among the facts which they have traced? On what principle is it that the most remote of their facts has place? The chemist who boasts his success in producing or dissolving the union of various bodies, may account in his own way for every change, by talking about affinities more or less strong; but he deceives himself and others with the technicalities of ignorance. In what these same affinities consist; whence they arise; and wherefore they exist at all, he is as unable to discover to you as the veriest infant. He knows barely the fact of their existence. That with him is every thing. But the difficulty, the mystery, is, that they exist at all.—The mechanical philosopher too may boast his discovery of the laws that control the movements of all matter; and therefore infer that he can do without a God. But whence these precise laws by which matter is regulated? What

is gravitation? whence does it arise? how does it operate? A child could tell you as readily as he!—We need not continue this illustration. The skeptics who doubted of the existence of every thing were by far the most consistent atheists: and they shewed themselves most learned! *Their* survey embraced many facts; for not one of which they were able to account. He who knows of nothing which he cannot fully comprehend, must indeed know but very little! Who then is the philosopher—the lover of wisdom—properly so called? Who displays the soundest mind and the greatest intelligence? He who scouts the truths of revelation, because many things are revealed which are too high to be understood? Or he who, taking measure of his faculties by a just acquaintance with the proper objects and necessary limits of human knowledge, makes no objection to the credibility of a statement, merely because it embraces subjects which his mind cannot grasp; but devoutly adopts it, on the strength of the testimony, provided that testimony be unexceptionable in its kind?

But we said there is another aspect in which men often view this matter. They say God is too wise to reveal things incomprehensible; and as the scriptures speak of such things, they cannot be from him.—Is this a sound assumption? Is it common sense? We appeal to the considerations just now stated on another ground. You know nothing of the ultimate laws of physics. You cannot tell how matter acts on matter, in contact or at a vast remove. But is your knowledge of the facts of no use to you? Cannot the chemist combine and decompose, although his chattering about affinities discloses nothing but his learned ignorance. Do not you avail you of the law of gravitation to millions of valuable purposes, because you know the

fact that matter tends to matter, although you know nothing of the principle on which it does so? Do you not employ the powers of your bodies and the faculties of your minds; and do they not subserve to you all the purposes of rational, immortal and accountable creatures; although you know almost nothing of yourselves? If the former objection leads to universal skepticism, this would sink us in universal slothfulness. We should attempt nothing—literally nothing, if we refused to avail us of the knowledge of facts, unless we could thoroughly sift and comprehend them.—Let the bible speak! Let my text speak! “Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain” the Most High: He is here: He is every where. You cannot comprehend this. The idea of omnipresence confounds you. But is it therefore a useless idea? Does the revelation of it from on high subserve no valuable purpose? What binds the conscience to the eternal throne, but the thought that God is every where? What leads the oppressed or the afflicted to his mercy seat, but the belief that he is near, “a very *present* help in trouble?” What rescues defenceless millions from the grasp of the powerful, the unjust or the unmerciful, but the awe-inspiring thought that God would be the witness, and very possibly the avenger of their multiplied enormities?

Let our text, then, fellow mortals, teach you a very plain but very important lesson, in relation to your reception of this book of God. As you do not reject the doctrine of the omnipresence of the Deity, because you cannot comprehend it. And as you admit that the knowledge of the doctrine is of incalculable importance, both for the promotion of piety and for the restraint of vice; learn to reflect that there may be many other things about the Dei-

ty, and about the modes of his procedure which lie equally beyond the grasp of your feeble understandings, but which nevertheless it may be proper and even indispensably necessary that you should know. Remember too that you are not the proper judges of the utility or inutility of the truths of revelation. They may have ten thousand uses of which you are not now apprized, and which will unfold themselves one by one, as your knowledge of God and of his Christ and of his bible increases. They may have other bearings too which you inconsiderately overlook, while you are in the very act of profiting by them. But above all things remember, that you are not judges about questions of credibility and incredibility, when God himself, his counsels and his ways are the subjects of revelation. If God be incomprehensible, if his understanding is infinite, and if all things live in him, so that his energies uphold and control and direct them, it is great folly in you to pronounce judgment on his word and ways, as if his thoughts were as your thoughts and his ways as your ways, and he himself a being altogether like yourselves. You cannot be judges of what is credible concerning him, unless you know him perfectly. You cannot determine what it is proper for him to do or not to do, or pronounce concerning the utility of his intervention, unless you thoroughly comprehend his plans, and discern the bearing of his interposition. You must learn to take his own word for these things. The evidence that *it is* his word lies in quite different channels. The bible is, at least principally, a record of facts. The testimony which establishes the authenticity of the record is ample and unexceptionable. If you can object on this score, do so. But never think of objecting to the authenticity of scripture, because

it gives you views of God and of his ways which do not comport with the views that you would yourself have given. You know nothing of him, the world knows nothing of him, but by revelation. It is the grand object, not only of the bible, but of the plan of redemption made known through the bible, to reveal him as he is—to unfold and illustrate his character and his ways to the whole intelligent universe. Is it not therefore very absurd, not to say impious, to sever these various displays which he has made of himself;—to adopt a part of revelation; to admit that he is Almighty, all-wise, merciful and just; and then to sit in judgment on other exhibitions, or on other *features* of his character, and to deny that they are worthy of God? You object, for example, to portions of bible history: you object to one or another intervention of his providence; and you do so upon the ground that you are a judge of propriety where God himself is the actor! Miserable reptile! do you know of whom you speak? Are you in possession of all the circumstances which shaped his conduct in the case? Do you know the actual state of those on whom he poured his judgments? or the objects to be accomplished by the instrumentality of those in whom he shewed his mercy? You object too to the plan of redemption, as being unworthy of God, and needless in itself. Rather learn from that plan the amazing depths of the Divine condescension: the awful severity of eternal justice: the unbending character of undivided sovereignty: the immutability of God's law: the glory of his faithfulness: the resources of his wisdom: the power of his arm. See if mercy shewn to mortals, and at such a cost, may not teach you something of the character of God, which otherwise you had never known. Or, if you are unable to read any

of these lessons, ask yourself if you are fully in possession of the case. Inquire whether other lessons may not be taught to other beings by the mystery of "God made manifest in the flesh." And remember while you do so that God whose plan it purports to be is not limited like you are in objects and in views. Immensity is the space over which his line is stretched, and the light of long eternity is to shew the bearings of his works.

And you object too that there should be mystery in the mode of the Divine existence: that Father, Son and Spirit should be the one Jehovah, appears unreasonable, for you cannot comprehend it. Then object to the doctrine of my text! discard God's omnipresence! for you cannot comprehend it. Disbelieve your own existence! disbelieve every thing! for there is nothing which you can comprehend. But suppose the thing true; as there are doubtless many things true which you can never fathom. Could you comprehend it, if it were true? Certainly not. Then your inability to comprehend it is no proof that it is not true. Your inability to comprehend it is no proof of its inutility as a part of revelation: for remember it is the foundation of the plan of grace; the sole foundation of your hope for immortality. If that be not true, you are deceived when you think of an omnipresent Saviour, or of the omnipresent Spirit of his grace; and the redemption of the one, and the sanctification of the other, notwithstanding all the importance which you are taught in scripture to attach to them, are but idle dreams.

In one word: beware of the seductions of those self-styled rational, but certainly most irrational and unphilosophical theologians, who profess to meet with nothing unfathomable in scripture; and decry the notion of mysteries

as the cant of fools and bigots. They are learned, they are rational, they are liberal! they will neither themselves admit, nor require others to believe any thing which their minds cannot fully comprehend. And thus by dexterous and glozing appeals to the vanity and self-sufficiency of the little glow-worms around them, they affect many mighty objects. What those objects are—it matters not—"A companion of fools shall be destroyed." But how do they establish their claim to rationality? and what is the foundation of these obtrusive pretensions to liberality? The rationality stands confessed in that singular success with which they have aspired to comprehend the Deity, while ordinary mortals cannot comprehend themselves, nor the meanest of God's works. But of course much must be rejected, which no creature can comprehend. There is no trinity of persons in the essence of the Deity; for they cannot comprehend it. There is no incarnation of the Son of God in the person of Messiah; for they cannot comprehend it. There is no such thing as the operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of sinful men; for they cannot comprehend it. And a thousand other things of which the scriptures speak familiarly are rejected by these rational and independent thinkers, for they cannot comprehend them. Behold then a broad foundation for the liberality of which we spoke! Divest the scriptures of all mystery, and you divest christianity of its distinguishing attributes. The bible teaches nothing but what creation teaches, what all creation learns. "The stars in their courses" speak the same thoughts as the prophets in their writings: and of course say the same things to devils and to men. But the stars have never told us of God manifest in the flesh; for they spoke as they now speak, before our

nature fell. The stars have never given any assurance to the nations that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." The stars have never hinted, what the scriptures say so plainly, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Of course none of these articles enter into the creed of stellar christianity. "No man is saved by proxy," is said to be their lesson. Behold then, we repeat it, a broad foundation for liberality! strike out from the blessed gospels what man cannot fathom, and what nature does not teach, and all men and all religions become pretty much alike. The most errant miscreant may be called a christian, if he dwells in christian lands; as the most brutal monster may be called a pagan if he reside in pagan climes. Every man is soothed with the hope of immortality, though he take not up his cross and follow Jesus Christ. Every man is liberal, who has the boldness and impiety to relax the obligations of the law of God.— O precious hope! O glorious fruit of deliverance from all mystery! People of every character, nations "of every hope," may rest in peace with Socrates, that mighty "man of God," that martyr for God's unity, who gave commandment with his dying breath that a chicken should be sacrificed to the God Æsculapius, and thus perished with the stain of the most gross idolatry, or, if he knew better, of the most abandoned hypocrisy, yet moist upon his lips. God, the God of truth has said it, that all who worship graven images shall be confounded. The "omnipresent" Deity has said it, "the wicked shall be turned into hell, with *all the nations* that forget God." But he too seems fond of mysteries. He has filled creation with them. Rational theologians, liberal minded men, have better news to tell us. Let them then admit that there is at least one thing

incomprehensible,—their stupendous assurance in usurping the name of christians! From such intelligible christianity the good Lord deliver us!!

But we have other and far more interesting reflections to offer you in relation to this great truth.

II. God is every where: all things live and move in him. Will not this consideration put to silence the objections so often marshaled against the doctrine of a particular providence? You repeatedly hear it said that man, and the affairs of our little world, are by far too insignificant to occupy or even attract the attention of so august a Being. Let him wield worlds, say they: let him guide the hosts of heaven: let him muster and control the elements of nature: let him dispense his blessings to the nations, by sending “rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons:” and let him interpose to punish or destroy whole continents at a swoop. These would be magnificent manifestations of his providence. But in little matters let nature operate according to her established laws. That God should stoop to every individual; that he should take care of reptiles, that his agency should be interposed to deck “the lilies of the field,”—these are ideas too degrading to be admitted for a moment.—And we have known some who, with greater boldness, and certainly with equal consistency, carried out these magnificent conceptions, as they supposed them. They would not admit that God exerts any influence over the movements or destinies of the visible creation. And they have pointed, with triumph, to the workmanship of man. Even he can shape his mechanism to move without his interference. By weights, or springs, or other moving causes, he can put into operation many a machine, then leave it to go on without his further care. And if

man can do such things, to an extent however limited, may not God, who is Almighty, so adjust the powers and frame the laws of nature as to set his worlds afloat, then leave them to themselves?

It might be sufficient to reply to the first class of objectors, that their conception of what is dignified and becoming in their Creator, can be correct only upon the assumption that he is as vain and unfeeling as themselves. It is your little minds that think little things beneath them. God who framed creation, and peopled it with innumerable beings so dependent and so exquisitely susceptible of pleasure and of pain—what would he be if he took no further notice of them? Dignified you say. Yes, *dignified* indeed.—And your mechanical philosopher might be required to tell us what the ingenuity of man had to do with the essence of that matter which he shaped into springs and pulleys, or with the gravity or elasticity that constitute the moving principle. He does not uphold matter by the word of his power, or by the sleight of his hand; he communicated to it no part of the laws by which it moves. In God every atom of that machine has its being. His power sustains it, his energies still impress the laws of matter on it: *therefore* it exists and moves obedient to those laws. But prove to me that he does not “uphold” as he at first *created* “all things by the word of his power:” prove that one atom, or that the universe could exist a moment, if his hand were withdrawn from either: prove that matter is susceptible of receiving and retaining any quality or tendency, apart from his immediate and all-controlling energies: and then you will have quoted a case in point. But if all things “move in God,” as the scriptures say they do; if all things are “upheld by the word of his

power," as the scriptures say they are; it is absurd to talk of worlds floating round without his care, and of bountiful nature performing her own functions, according to fixed laws, and independently of him.

But this question is entitled to more intimate attention. It cannot have escaped the notice of any well informed and observant mind that the objections leveled against scriptural doctrines generally, and against the doctrine of an all-directing providence in particular, and declaredly founded upon a sense of the propriety and fitness of things,—it cannot, we say, have escaped the notice of such minds as we have named, that these objections are bottomed upon a sophism the most gross and flagrant. Men do not take the God of the bible, as he is there delineated, and examine the fitness of the principles and purposes and procedure imputed to him in scripture, with a reference to that delineation of himself. But they assume that they know his character, and comprehend his nature, sufficiently, by the lights of their own intelligence. They frame to themselves a creature of the fancy: they divest this figment of many of the most important features of the Deity, or rather they are ignorant that such features are anywhere imputed to him: and then, they apply to this mutilated image, the characters and agencies which the scriptures ascribe to God. Is it any wonder that they find them most unsuitable! Is it strange to hear them say, I disbelieve in God's providence, for it is irreconcilable with his character! I discard the doctrine of redemption, for it is irreconcilable with my ideas of his supremacy and benignity! I give to the winds an hundred other scriptural dogmas; their propriety or their usefulness I cannot comprehend. What God? Whose character? Whose supremacy? Whose

benignity?—Not the God of the bible! for surely if he be every where, and all things live in him; a particular providence is not unsuitable to his character. Not the God of the bible! for if he be invariably just, immutably true and unutterably merciful; the redemption of the cross may well be attributed to him. Not the God of the bible! for if his principles and feelings and purposes and whole character be well and truly depicted in the scriptures, they do not state one thing which is unsuitable to him! May not every one see that it is not Jehovah, the God of the bible, to whom men ascribe those attributes and agencies which they find so very inapplicable!! At whose door, then, lies the charge of inconsistency? Let them correct their apprehensions of the Deity himself. Let them know him; and then tell us if the bible makes one statement irreconcilable with the character of the bible God.

It is no new device to disrobe the Deity of the glory of his omnipresence, to think of him like the pagans thought of their great Jupiter,—as a being all human, except in the greatness of his qualities; a being who sat removed at a distance from his creatures, and could fix or withdraw his attention at will. “Is not God, in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are! How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to him that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.” Thus men often talk, said that Eliphaz of Teman who came to share the sorrows of the suffering Job. So, it seems, they chattered during the age before the flood. “Hast thou marked,” he continues, “the old way which wicked men have trodden; which were cut down out of time; whose foundation was overthrown with a flood; which said unto

God depart from us; and what can the Almighty do for them?" Yet he saw them! The "dark cloud was no shelter from his judgments. They learned that he was not confined to "the circuit of heaven," when his cataracts cut them down, and the fountains of the great deep overthrew their strong foundations.

You too may very consistently deny a particular providence, and scout the ideas of danger and of dependence, if you suppose that God only "walketh in the circuit of heaven," and infer that he cannot "judge through the dark cloud." If God be such a being, the doctrine of a particular providence would indeed rather seem to be irreconcilable with his station. To inspect every thing, to control every thing, would truly be an occupation rather laborious than dignified. But what have these dreams to do with him of whom we speak, and whose providence we "assert?" Think of his omnipresence! "heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him." Think of the beautiful idea of the Apostle Paul! God is the great reality, the only independent existence. The same power that produced continues to uphold all other things in existence; in him they have life, if living creatures; in him they move; *in* him they have their being. Could any operation in nature, then proceed without his agency? could any law of creation be permanent unless his hand permanently impressed it? The universality of God's providence therefore follows necessarily from the fact that creation has no independent existence or activity.

But another view of this subject may be taken. If God be omnipresent; if all magnitudes, all distances, all that marks proportion among the creatures of his hand, be annihilated before him, then it is folly to talk of his control-

ing suns and systems, while he leaves sparks and atoms to be ruled by accident. He doubtless discerns proportions, even more accurately than you can; but he is not like you affected by them. That atom moves in the bosom of his immensity, and a world can do no more. With him it is the same to wield an atom or the universe. And when you take into the account that no multiplicity distracts his attention or divides his thought, you may well conclude that every thing he formed, and still upholds by his omnipotence, he will likewise direct to the end for which he made it.

Why then should you doubt the truth—I know you can feel the tenderness—of that delightful assurance given us by the Saviour? God fosters every blade of grass; God sheds its beauty over every flower of the field; God hears the young ravens when they cry to him for food; God sympathises with the sparrow when it falls to the ground; God takes notice when one of your hairs is loosened from its seat. Creation's former! Creation's fosterer! Creation's dearest friend! He made it, and he loves it. He made it, and he fosters it. He made it a necessary dependent on himself, and he never can forget its dependent situation. A world floats yonder among the stars of God: its crowded population cannot guide it in its track, nor ward off the shock of any whirling comet. Dependent creatures, you are not left defenceless. God is present with you to protect your habitation. He made it, and he made those comets that endanger it. On them too he rides; he will keep them in their path; "for that his arm is strong not one of them shall fail."—And yonder bird that floats upon the bosom of the air: that is his creature too, and he its whole dependence. Simple little thing, it knows not its

benefactor; but it is the thing he made, it is not beneath his care; and though it be but a sparrow, when its little heart begins to throb, when its wing begins to fail, that sparrow's father will not be regardless. He, perhaps, of all the universe, is its only friend. Carry then this lesson home with you: You only degrade the Deity, when you erect yourself into a standard by which to try the scriptural account of his attributes and ways. Recollect that if his agency lies concealed behind an host of second causes, it only proves that he does no violence to the constitutions he has established. But he marshals those causes; his supreme intelligence points the laws of nature to the fulfilment of his will. Recollect too, that if many things which take place seem irreconcilable with this idea of the divine appointment, there is good reason why it should be so. It is a world of sin and rebellion in which you live, and all creation shares in the degradation and punishment of him who received the appointment of creation's Lord. Account for them as you will, the melancholy facts exist. How then are they irreconcilable with a belief in providence!

III. Finally, let the omnipresence of the Deity be regarded as the grand consideration for enforcing all the duties of morality and religion. How great, how wonderful is God! "the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him." What an atom, what a shadow is each one of you! What a feeble thing this universe, which exists only in God! He upholds it in being: were he to withdraw that power which props existence, in an instant all would disappear; and God—God alone, God the great reality, would remain. Mortals! you whose breath is in his hand! you whose functions and whose very being would vanish

like a dream, were his hand to let you go! are you not astonished, are you not confounded at the folly and wickedness of your own hearts? God upholds you, and you overlook your dependence on him! In him, only in him, you have life and breath and being; and your whole conduct shews how little you venerate his character, or regard your obligations to him! Did we say you neglect God? Did we say you do not venerate him? Why that were innocence, that were glory, compared with what the best of you have done! It is he who still keeps up the little lamp of your intelligence: and how often have you insulted him by trimming that feeble thing, and then opposing it to the blaze of heaven's own light; as if your lamp could quench the lustre of the ray divine, and persuade your purblind fellows that you were quite sufficient to give the nations day! How often have you abused, nay, prostituted your reason, in attempting to make void the messages of his mercy and the holiness of his law, made known for your salvation!—You “live and move” in him, and the whole energies of your nature, which he feeds from his own life, you have wantonly and wickedly and remorsefully put forth against the throne and monarchy of God, while you did the very thing which he prohibits your attempting, and did it before his face! It is because he never leaves you, that you can stretch forth your hands, that you can use your feet; and while God was in the act of maintaining life and motion, your hands have compassed wickedness, and your feet ran swiftly in the way of transgression. All creation likewise lives in him; the beauty that decks and the plenty and variety that bless creation, are upheld by him. Only think how often you have perverted these! Regardless of the uses to which he designates them, un-

thankful for the privilege of being permitted to taste them, you wrenched them, as it were, from the hand of the Almighty, and employed them in such ways as depraved your own appetites, added fuel to your passions, and rendered you more resolute in irreligion and impiety. Is not this the history of every transgressor here? Yes, and it is the history of every apostate, be they men or devils, the universe abroad. In God all live and move. Every thing that they prostitute as incentives to impiety is upheld by him, and while he is thus sustaining them in life and breath and being, they strike like vipers at the hand that holds them!! Take note then, if you can, of the heights and depths of sin! Say if it be a small thing to be a rebel against your maker: to outrage the power that produced and sustains those faculties which you pervert and those blessings which you abuse. See the omnipresent God! think how you are living in him, at the very moment when you disboey him! and then, when the conviction of your enormities flashes on your conscience, let yours be the language of the humble Job: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Mortals! we have another charge to set in array against you! How often have we heard it suggested by some of you that you do not like to be addressed as if it were presumed possible to force or frighten you into measures for securing your salvation. You are willing to be allured and persuaded in this matter; but your spirits revolt at the idea of compulsion. You are willing! Is this a fact? And how often have you listened to the salutations of Messiah's peace, soft and tender as the lutes of seraphim? and in the sight of the omnipresent God, how stands

the case to-day! How often have we ourselves besieged you with testimonials of the Saviour's grace and goodness; while Jesus Christ has recorded his own assurance that you have no helper but himself; and has solemnly addressed you by all your hopes of heaven and fears of hell to fly to him without delay; and has declared with all earnestness that if you came you should in no wise be rejected; and has plead with you and assured you that his yoke is very easy and that he would make your burden light. And now before the omnipresent God we ask you, what is your state to-day!

Presumptuous mortals! will you venture to prescribe the terms or the tone in which the Most High shall dictate the message of salvation? Behold the omnipresent God! You live in him: you move in him. And after you have abused the goodness that upholds and the bounty that supplies you, you deem it an indignity to be addressed in any terms but those which are calculated to flatter and allure. Is this the temper of a mortal or of a fiend? What! when "the heavens are not clean in his sight, and he chargeth his angels with folly: what! when he holds creation in his grasp, and all its glories fade before his brightness: must he too be cautious,—I do not say when he taxes a puny mortal with its offences, but when in surprising mercy he offers to rescue it from impending ruin—must he too be cautious lest he should tread too closely on the dignity of manhood, and offend by plainness when he might have succeeded by greater courtesy and caution! We cannot give an answer to such unheard of requisition. It confounds, it stupifies us. But we can tell you one thing that may prove useful if you will ponder it. If God be so great and you so very little; if he be independent, and you all

dependence, the bible appears in a light of the utmost consistency, when it states in the plainest and most authoritative terms the will of God for your salvation. You must have observed the stubborn and unaccommodating character of all its communications. There is no anxious accommodation of its doctrines or directions to the tastes, or prejudices, or passions of mankind. It unveils with equal plainness *every* feature in the character of God, whether of an inviting or forbidding kind. Of his plans and purposes and sovereignty it speaks, without manifesting the least deference for human wishes or opinions. And in all its requisitions, you see yourselves called upon to bow to his disposal, and to come up to his standard. There is no middle ground; there is but the one alternative, obedience or perdition. What then do you expect of the ministry of Jesus Christ? That they should deal softly with your prejudices? that they should be tender of your feelings? that they should do homage to your intelligence? that they should flatter yourself-importance?—And all these for what purpose? That puny mortals, creatures as guilty and polluted as they are weak, may be coaxed and flattered into an acceptance of salvation. Nothing too awful in the character of God must be shewn them: nothing too rigid in the requisitions of his law must be stated to them: nothing too unpalatable in the doctrines of christianity i.e. in the principles of the divine government, must be laid before them: nothing that might reflect on their ignorance or unworthiness must be suggested to them: Lest perhaps they should be disgusted with the preacher, and kick at the offers of salvation. God of omnipresence, hast thou witnessed these demands! Away! away! Atom as thou art, thou art a mountain of presumption. Let pagan

philosophers make court to the pride and prejudices of humanity: let *them* cautiously and cunningly study the wishes of their hearers, lest they lose their admirers and make shipwreck of their fortunes. Let unprincipled sycophants, who usurp the titles of the christian ministry, conceal or dilute the doctrines of revelation, as suits the corruption of the audience and the base selfishness of the preacher. A christian must bow to the supremacy of heaven; and the man who really studies the interests of your salvation will simply declare "the truth as it is in Jesus:" for to flatter is not to save you. In order to be saved, *you* must learn to bow to the supremacy of heaven. God is dictator: it is a mortal's part to obey. We have nothing to do with modeling christian doctrine. We have no authority to accommodate the messages of mercy to the exorbitant demands of human presumption or perverseness. Here are the living oracles. Here is *God's* statement of his plans and purposes. Here is *his* estimate of human character. How readest thou? We stand but as the messengers of Almighty God. God of omnipresence, thou hearest us, thou upholdest us, while we speak thy message! All these are upheld by thee while they hear thy message! Shall they dictate? shall we conform?—No. We have only to repeat the questions: "how readest thou?" what sayest thou? And then we leave the issues in the hand of God. If indeed you will humble yourselves in the presence of his glory, if you will come take up the cross, if you will come and wear his yoke, O fellow sinners, fellow confessors, fellow labourers, he will hail your accession to the church of Christ; we will aid you; we will weep with you; we will rejoice with you; we will bear with your infirmities, remembering that we also are in the flesh, and

“compassed about with manifold infirmities:” we will imitate the Saviour who is so tender and gentle among his little lambs. But here we stand, the ministers of God, and in his own immediate presence. We will never compromise the dignity of his message, or veil the majesty of him in whom you live, to flatter or allure you. If a mortal will not bear the light of heaven’s own truth, if the Saviour’s voice must be modeled to his liking: why let him keep aloof from the gentle lamb of God: but know that thou shalt meet him rampant as a lion, in the day of God Almighty.

But have we lead you to this mountain, the omnipresence of the Deity, only to discover to you such a scene as once affrighted the whole camp of Israel, earthquake, and thunders and lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet sounding loud and long? Christians! cannot you tell both of consolation and of safety flowing from the sense that God is every where?

In afflictions does it not console you? For as all hearts and all agencies are in his own hand, no evil can befall you without his cognizance, without his permission. It is in fact his own hand that leads you into these distresses, that he may humble you and try you, and shew you what is in your own heart. And you know that he is merciful and of very tender pity: “he afflicteth not willingly, nor grieveth the children of men.”

In sickness does it not cheer you? The Lord is ever nigh, and in all your sickness he will smooth your bed.

In difficulties does it not encourage you? You have an Almighty friend at hand. “Cast thou thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain it for thee.” “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths.”

In persecutions does it not arm you? He "makes the wrath of man to praise him; and the remainder of wrath he will restrain." To him you can lift your supplication, "deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword: from men, which are thy hand, O Jehovah:" And no creature may withstand him if once he issue his mandate, "touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

Amid dangers does it not embolden you? He led Joseph like a flock, he conducted Israel through the howling wilderness: "in all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." He is here, he is every where, he is ever ready to compass you with the shield of his salvation.

In your prayers does it not animate you? Though you enter into your closet and pray in secret, your Father sees in secret, and he can work his answer openly. You can lie prostrate at his feet: you can almost entwine your arms around him: you can pour out your heart with earnestness, when you feel that he is present.

In your duties does it not quicken you? You remember that his eye is on you: he sees the way you take: and as heaven's cherubim are faithful, as they do all his will with cheerfulness, and delight to promote his service under his own benignant eye, you too can feel the impulse of such a thrilling thought, and conduct in the very temper with which you are taught to pray "thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

In temptations may it not preserve you? If you saw him "face to face," would you go aside from his commandments or trample on his law? If you heard his awful voice, would you turn upon your heel and give audience to the tempt-

er? If in the secret chamber his mild persuasions or terrible warnings greeted you, would you transgress with the boldness and security of concealment? If a sudden glory shone around you at the midnight hour, would you feel determined as though wrapped up in the mantle of the night? Were you to discern his hand writing bitter things against you, on that wall were he now writing, or at any moment when you are outraging his law or his gospel, were you to see his hand inscribing "Mene, mene, tekel upharsin," who would not tremble? who would not desist? who would not humble them before that awful hand? Christians! he saw you yesterday; Mortals! he sees you every day; when you trample on his law, when you give audience to the tempter, when you adventure in any form on secret faults or on presumptuous sins. In the secret chamber he saw your crimes, he is a present witness. Dark night hid nothing from him, "the darkness and the light are both alike to him." In his bible you hear his voice, the mildest persuasions and warnings the most terrible. On its pages he has inscribed the destiny of the transgressor, Mene, mene tekel upharsin. Abuser of those blessings which bountiful providence has subjected to thy control! he has numbered, he has numbered thy dominion over his creatures, and now he is about to bring it to an end. Vain mortal who hast set thyself against the supremacy of heaven! "thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting." O you who trusted in darkness or in secrecy, like Babylon's proud monarch in high walls and brazen gates, upharsin, upharsin, has been written on your destiny; your protections have been prostrated, your strong bands have been sundered, your strength, your influence, is about to be divided among those who may more honestly and more worthily employ it.

Christian! O Christian! will you subject yourself to this? shall others be selected to bear the standard of the cross? shall others be your successors in the apostleship of Christ, from which you, like Judas, by transgression fell? Nay, think of all the threatnings recorded in his word. Think how if you yield to the force of any temptation, God is present, and will see you; *present*, and his strong hand may forthwith fulfil his threatnings; present, and he "respecteth no man's person."

Fellow mortals! "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in his people's help, and in his excellency upon the sky.—Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people, saved by Jehovah, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency."—Amen.

SERMON III.

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of rejoicing, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2. TIM. iv. 7, 8.

WE have often admired the noble simplicity of the lesson which the Saviour, in a single sentence, conveyed to his disciples, upon their return from a mission among the villages of Judea. They had been sent forth with a direction to proclaim to all Israel that the kingdom of God was come: and, in order to secure the greater attention to that message, the power of working miracles had been liberally dispensed to them. We are not informed what reception was given to their great message; but in the exhibition of their credentials they were abundantly successful. However coldly the multitudes may have listened to the injunction, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" they gave large tribute of attention to the persons of these wonder working messengers of God.

The disciples themselves appear to have been elated with the possession of such powers; and returning to the Saviour, they cried out with eager joy, "Lord even the devils are subject to us through thy name." But he manifested no feeling responsive to their gladness. "Rejoice

not" he replied—"in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." How singular, and yet how just, was the answer of Jesus Christ! The honors of a prophet or of a minister of God are at best of a doubtful character. Balaam, and perhaps others of the old testament prophets, who had "heard the words of God, and seen the vision of the Almighty," nevertheless perished in their sins: and we have the Saviour's own word for it, that, of new testament ministers, "many," in addition to the false-hearted Iscariot, shall be compelled to depart with the workers of iniquity, though they "have prophesied in his name, and cast out devils, and in his name done many wonderful works."

Behold, then, says the Redeemer, a far higher ground of triumph! behold an occasion of far more heart-felt joy than that Satan, at your bidding, should fall like lightning from heaven! Faithful disciples, your names are written in the book of life: it is yours to rejoice in that humble, *common* hope which has cheered the hearts of myriads, who never in their lives, by any word of wisdom, or by any work of power, attracted the attention or homage of the crowd. And—let all people hear it! unobtrusive as are the trophies of a victory over sin, vulgar as is the privilege of calling heaven our home, humble as are the pretensions of "a sinner saved by grace;" yet to the eye that measures all things by the standard of eternity, these ordinary distinctions assume a proud pre-eminence over those far more splendid feats—done though they be for the cause of Jesus Christ—which fill the world with wonder, and set all hell aghast.

I know, my dear brethren, that there are none of you

who will think of questioning the soundness of an opinion pronounced by Jesus Christ. But I also know that there is a very wide difference between that species of assent which a scrupulous regard for authorities extorts, and that strong conviction which is brought directly home to "the business and bosom," by a full and feeling apprehension of the facts. Our pre-possessions are naturally on the opposite side of this question. Reason as we may, "the pomp of circumstance" throws a delusive splendour around men and things; and with both sage and simpleton

"A saint in crape is twice a saint in lawn."

The apostolic office seals, in our opinion, the pretensions of its holders to more than common excellence. 'Happy men,' we cry, 'who wrought signs and wonders in the name of Jesus! and happiest of all the generations of mankind, that which was so favored as to hear apostles preach!'

To-day we would convince you of your mistake about this matter. We would shew you that an humble and sincere profession of our common christianity was the sole foundation of their lasting fame; and that the consolations which brightened their last hours of life, were precisely of the kind which the gospel unfolds to all who shall embrace it, to the end of time.

The occasion of our meeting is peculiarly favorable for such an undertaking. We commemorate the departure to her eternal home, of one of your own number, well known to all of you; and by many whom I address very tenderly beloved. She "loved the appearing" of our Lord Jesus Christ: and now, in the place of departed spirits, she awaits the coming of that glorious day in which Saul of Tarsus and Margareta Fletcher shall together re-

ceive from the hand of God their Saviour their renovated bodies and their immortal crowns. You will doubtless, therefore, be the more willingly convinced that unobtrusive christianity, in its simplest form, constitutes the common foundation and measure of the glory and felicity allotted to all who pass, in any age, through the gates of immortality: and that to apostles, who wrought miracles and heralded salvation, and to you who must pursue unnoticed or unknown the "noiseless tenor of your way," the highest of all privileges is dispensed with equal hand—the privilege of rejoicing that your names are written in heaven.

We are happy that it is in our power to illustrate this truth by a case which must sweep before it every lingering prejudice, and carry conviction to the dullest understanding. You are accustomed to revere the memory of "the apostle of the gentiles," and, in consideration of the office he sustained, to pay the same respect to his decisions that you hold to be due to those of his Lord and master. How great, then, must be the advantage derivable from such authority, when the apostle utters the very sentiment in question under the circumstances and feelings which gave birth to the epistle in which you find our text! It is the last of his letters. It was not forwarded as a document addressed to all the churches, under the broad seal of the apostolic office. It is a private letter, of Paul the aged prisoner; and it is addressed to an individual whom he dearly loved. It was penned while he was awaiting the judgment of the tyrant, who soon afterwards dismissed him to his eternal rest: and it was penned under the strong apprehension of such an event; for in the course of it he remarks that dangers were thickening around him, and feelingly complains that even christians had been deterred from shewing him any countenance.

What sustained the spirit of the apostle of the gentiles, under these appalling circumstances? It was not the recollection that the arm now cramped with irons once gallantly sustained the banner of the cross, and planted it firmly before the very portals of many an idol's temple: it was not that the tongue now condemned to silence, used to roll the words of inspiration through the churches, to the joy or consternation of attendant thousands: it was not that works of wonder wrought in the name of Jesus, commended his glad tidings to the acquiescence of the million: No! it was nothing of all these that cheered him. His heart turned for refuge to the common hope of men—an hope which, in its foundations, any one of you may emulate. After penning such instructions and advice as he judged most profitable for his youthful friend, he thus feelingly and briefly adverts to his own condition: 'As for myself, I am done forever with all care and danger:' "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing."

Thus you see, it was not the distinguished station or important trust by which his name has been emblazoned, that cheered his last, lone hours. It was the delightful consciousness that he had filled his station with a becoming spirit, and discharged its duties with singleness of heart. It was the deliberate conviction that "the faith" which he had kept, would bear him safely through the awful scrutiny to which he must submit before the bar of God. Nor does he speak of that crown of righteousness which awaited him, as at all peculiar to his elevated station. I shall

inherit it, he says, in common with every individual who loves the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Who then will not admit the paramount importance of those common excellencies and common hopes, on which the apostle rested his dying eyes! The trials that beset us, the duties that occupy us, the stations that are filled by us, depend on the allotment of the God of providence. The bare fact that they are ours speaks nothing in our favor. Nor are the greatness of the trials, the magnitude of the duties, or the dignity of the station, the matters of chief concern. He who is faithful over a very little, will be faithful also over much. So judges Jesus Christ: and according to this rule allots the crowns of righteousness. In pondering the triumphs of the apostle Paul, you therefore view the foundations of our common hope; and, so, cannot regard yourselves as disinterested auditors, while we attempt to define, by so illustrious an example,

I. The DIFFICULTIES, and

II. The RECOMPENSE, of a Christian profession.

I. The difficulties. You recollect the reception which the Saviour gave to the application of some one who, from motives which most probably were of a doubtful character, desired to be received into the number of his followers. He did not directly discountenance the applicant, but he deemed it proper to tell him the discouraging truth: "the foxes have holes, and the fowls of the air have nests; but the Son of man has not where to lay his head." It was no singular alternative to which that man was pointed, when thus taught to deliberate before he declared his choice. For, however indolence may soothe itself, and self-love indulge its flatteries, it is a straight and narrow way that leads to the gates of life. The Saviour, who wrought salvation,

and who was doubtless too wise to volunteer needless self-denial or court unprofitable pain, is uniformly delineated as "the man of sorrows." And he who runs may read it in every page of scripture that all who aspire to share his triumphs must lay out their accounts to "suffer with him" too. The apostle, in whose joys you so cordially sympathize, and the honors of whose name you so enthusiastically cherish, pleads no exemption from the common lot. It is true indeed that his "light affliction," enduring only for a moment, bears so small a proportion to "the exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which now recompenses him, that it almost disappears from the account. Indeed, in our admiration of his labours and veneration for his character, we lose sight of the fact that he was compassed with infirmities, as well as other men. And while we feel that it is of little consequence to him what treatment he once received from wicked and unreasonable men, or what difficulties he encountered in accomplishing his great work, now that he rests from all his labours, and is blessed in beholding their ever augmenting fruits; we scarcely know how to sympathize in the sorrows that wrought these triumphs: but coolly regarding them for a little moment, we close the curtain of oblivion over them and bid them a long good night.

Yet Saul of Tarsus had his difficulties and sorrows, which affected him precisely as they would affect any other christian man; and he ranges them under the three melancholy heads of conflict, sorrow and temptation, when feelingly adverting to them in the words of my text. Do you ask me what difficulties or sorrows or temptations could beset so good a man; aided as he was by the spirit of inspiration, armed with authority to work all manner of miracles, and animated with such nearness of intercourse

with heaven? You have heard his declaration: and all his epistles, and his whole history goes to prove that his was a life of the most painful conflict. He had conflicts with his own heart; conflicts with erring, and with false-hearted brethren; conflicts with the sworn enemies of the cross of Christ: and incessant conflicts with the powers of darkness. Nor were his labours lightened by the possession of a power of working signs and wonders in the name of Jesus. Nor was temptation precluded by the blessed privilege of maintaining close communion with his God. Whatever extraordinary endowments he possessed, they were given him exclusively "for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ." They by no means excluded the ordinary principles and motives of christian conduct, nor were they a protection from the arrows that rankle in the bosoms of ordinary men. Even a greater than Saul of Tarsus fulfilled the common duties and felt the common ills of life; who then was the apostle, that he should plead exemption! He did not pretend it. He never once desired it. He was, though an apostle, still nothing better than a sinner saved by grace: and he tasted largely of the dregs that fill a sinners cup.

Inheriting the ruins of a fallen nature, he had to encounter the difficulties and self-denial which chequer the life of the most ordinary christian. He found, in common with his fellow sinners, "a law in his members warring against the law of his mind;" and he was often forced to lament, as bitterly as any of you, that "when he would do good, evil was present with him." Painful watchings and ardent prayers were his as well as ours; and well may we tremble at the fool-hardy security in which we often find ourselves, when such a man as Paul, apostle though he was,

watched and fasted and "kept under his body," lest, after having borne the banner of the cross to the remotest haunts of men, and dispensed salvation to myriads of the perishing, he "should himself at last be found a cast-away." Shame on those professors of the faith of Christ, who can talk of the way of life as if it were carpeted with flowers, and of their own deceitful hearts, as if pure and buoyant as the hearts of cherubim, when the prince of the apostles pined as a patient in this great lazarus-house, and trod his weary course bowing beneath his load of depravity and death! "Wretched man!" he cried, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" And long as he lived he gave his days to self-denial and watchfulness and prayer.

Nor did he boast any advantage over ordinary men in grappling with the difficulties that beset him from without. Who does not recollect how Saul of Tarsus felt, when professors and preachers of the religion of Jesus Christ laboured to undermine his influence with the churches of Galatia; and acting upon the principle "divide and conquer"—that GOLDEN RULE of the base and feeble-minded!—attempted, by puffing the apostle Peter, to prostrate the fair fame of the "apostle of the gentiles?" All that envy could dictate or malignity dare, he endured at the hands of false-hearted brethren. Who has not noted the diligence and faithfulness with which he watched over the churches he had planted; and with what fervour and firmness he interposed his efforts to protect or rescue them from the seductions of those teachers who laboured to corrupt the gospel of Jesus Christ? To the plain mind of Saul of Tarsus it by no means appeared sufficient for the purposes of salvation that men were sincere in the opinions they professed. The gospel, the real gospel, and nothing

but the gospel, was recognized by him as the religion that can save a sinful soul from death. Nor did he hesitate one moment to denounce deep perdition on the corrupters as well as opposers of the doctrines of the cross. In pursuing this course, he laid no peculiar stress on his apostolic office. He appealed, uniformly to those scriptures by which we must all abide: and by the scriptures he confirmed the doctrines which he preached.

Nor were his conflicts maintained exclusively with errorists in religion. He describes himself as wrestling not only "against flesh and blood," but "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places." Well may descriptions of panoply, and all the imagery of warfare abound in the writings of the apostle Paul; for his was a life of conflicts.

But it was not only in *defending* the religion of the bible that the apostle experienced difficulties. In promulgating the gospel his large endowments, generally speaking, rather contributed to multiply his labours, and increase his pains. Did he possess great influence? It only served to render him a more conspicuous object at which all might aim their shafts. Did he inherit great powers? They only stimulated him to greater exertions and more extended plans for the furtherance of the objects for which they were entrusted to him. Were his labours honoured with unusual success? That success but multiplied the objects of his solicitude, and augmented the number and the perils of those journeys which "the care of all the churches" exacted at his hands.

How shall we recount the labours of this apostle, who outstriped all his fellows in the promotion of his master's

service! How shall we depict the dangers he encountered, the sufferings he endured, the obloquy he bore throughout the whole course of his eventful life! One comprehensive sentence must embrace the whole, for time would fail us were we to attempt detail. Let his own enumeration to the church of Corinth inform you what things he suffered while running the race that Christ had set before him. "Are they ministers of Christ?" says he, when adverting to some who it would seem had been exalted and eulogized, for the purpose of letting him down; as in the case just noted in the church of Galatia—"are they ministers of Christ? I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes, save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

And if this will not satisfy you that the apostle ran a most painful race through life, hear him once more, when addressing the same church. "I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed unto death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools, for Christ's sake—we are weak—we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and

have no certain dwelling place; and labour, working with our own hands. Being reviled—being persecuted—being defamed. We are made as the filth of the world; and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.”

Such were the labours and sufferings of Paul! and such the recompense he received from many of the churches, and from the heathen for whose salvation he ventured on these trials! Is it any wonder that he should add, after glancing at such a series of discouragements and hardships, “I have kept the faith!” The apostle, you will now see, was constituted like other men; he suffered like other men; he felt like other men: and each successive instance of trial with which he met carried in it its own temptation to desert his Lord and master. Many who like him bore about within them a body of sin and death, have after a fair profession of the faith of Christ yielded themselves up the servants of iniquity: but Saul still struggled on, still grappled with corruption, and kept fast hold of his hope in God his Saviour. Many who like him had devoted their whole persons to the cause of God the Saviour, have turned aside like Demas to the present world, and given the cause of Zion to the winds of heaven: but Paul still “kept the faith,” and nothing could abate his efforts for its furtherance. Many who like him had “received the word with joy,” have “been stumbled and turned aside, when persecutions and tribulations rose” on account of their profession: but in despite of the persecutions and tribulations just recounted, Paul still “kept the faith.” Many who like him had drank in their first impressions from the pure word of God, have been seduced by the sophistry of false teachers of religion, or by the imposing speculations of a vain philosophy: but he resisted to the

uttermost the jewish legalist, the gentile sophist, and the errorist of every name, and to the hour when he penned this last memento "kept *pure* the faith" of Jesus.

Nor did he disdain to promote that faith by submitting himself to the humblest occupations. When labouring together with others, among the newly established churches, this great, good man has been known to betake him to the occupation of a tent-maker, that by supplying his own wants and those of his fellow labourers, in order that the infant churches might not be burdened with their maintenance; and that no mortal might be furnished with the colour of a pretense that they were heralding salvation from mere sordid motives. How different was thy mind, high-souled Saul of Tarsus, from the minds of the multitudes who would deem themselves disgraced by being seen to labour in any humble occupation. And how respectable that hand when wielding the hatchet or stretching the primed line, though contrasted with the soft white hands of those who place one half their dignity in a release from vulgar offices!

But thy humble occupations and thy matchless services have long since ceased together. The hand that once shaped tents now sweeps the harps of heaven; and now that the monarch of the golden palace—the tyrant who condemned thee, has not where to lay his head, and meets with none so lowly as to do him reverence; thou lone prisoner! hast a habitation in the heavens, an house not made with hands, and bending millions do their lowliest reverence to "the apostle of the gentiles."

And now, my dear friends, we again urge the inquiry, what feature do you trace in the character of this apostle, which may be pronounced unattainable by the humblest

professor of the christian faith? Or what motive gave direction to the efforts of his life, that does not in its measure address itself to you. In the public character you discern the private christian, ever exemplifying the conduct he recommended to others, and inspired by the views and sustained by the consolations which he uniformly presents to those whom he addresses.

He was a man who himself imitated his great Lord and master, to whose example all men under every circumstance are pointed. And just as the Saviour, in the form of a servant, never pursued interests separate from those of the universal governor, never served himself—never pleased himself; but did God's will on earth with the singleness of heart that marks the services of spirits of heaven; so Saul of Tarsus lived as a subject of God's government, and drew the reasons and the motives of the conduct he pursued from the discoveries made to all in the page of inspiration. He was a christian, and a great one, simply because conformed to the image of his master; and still among men that is the best christian, and he the best minister in the church of Jesus Christ, who in the spirit of his conduct most strikingly resembles the Lord Jesus Christ, or that faithful apostle who followed him so closely.

Behold then, Christians! the burden of your difficulties! In the sorrows, in the labours, in the zeal of the apostle there was nothing at all peculiar. Looking back, you may record as he recounted concerning himself, "without were fightings, within were fears." Looking around, you may behold yourselves threatened as he was with "perils among false brethren," with "oppositions of science," and with the antipathies "of wicked and unreasonable men." Neither the gospel of God's Son nor the dispositions of his fal-

len creatures have changed their character since the days of Paul. There is therefore, just the same occasion now to fight the good fight, to struggle on in a christian course, and to keep the faith of Christ, uncorrupted by false doctrines and unshaken by temptation, as when the good apostle triumphed in his victories. True, neither your talents nor your station may admit such extensive efforts or such conspicuous conflicts as those in which he toiled. Nor may it be the case that your spirit is fired by the same animating successes, or kept in awe by a responsibility as tremendous. Recollect however that "it is required of a man, not according to that which he hath not, but according to that which he hath." Recollect also the judgment of the Saviour, he who is unfaithful in the least is unfaithful also in that which is greatest of all. If Paul had five talents, and but one is entrusted to you, it by no means follows that you may hide it in a napkin. "Occupy till I come," is the charge of Jesus Christ to every creature; and though two little mites be the amount of all you boast, cast them without reserve into the treasury of your Lord, and see if he do not tell that you cast in all your living.

And what is there, after all, so very appalling in the pains and responsibilities of a christian profession! You have been pondering the condition of the apostle Paul. It was through life, of a character so extremely distressing that he declares on one occasion that if his own hopes and those of his fellow-labourers had been confined to this life, they would have been "of all men the most miserable." And now you see him at the very close of his race, a poor persecuted prisoner, deserted by his friends, dependent on the courtesy of every turn-key, and with bloody death be-

fore him. This is christianity in her very worst array: mark with what buoyancy she rises. Is this, Saul of Tarsus! the end of all thy labours! the fruit of all thy prayers! Is it here, in the cold grave, that heart shall be stilled forever, which beat with an affection so strong and true and tender!—No! says the apostle,—No! This is but the beginning of life to Saul of Tarsus. “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,” &c.—It is this consummation of a christian course that is to form the

II. Subject of discourse.

The mind of the apostle rests on one of those splendid and elevated images, so familiarly employed in scripture to designate the glories of that world of spirits into which the righteous pass at death. Our conceptions of the nature of spiritual existence must at best be very confused and inadequate: and immersed as we are in matter, the mere children of sense, we should be able to form no apprehension of the eternal world were it not delineated to us by varied allusions to sensible objects. Hence the robes and harps and crowns employed to shadow forth the blessedness of a state of things which it has entered into the heart of no man to conceive. But of one thing we may be certain. When we reflect, brethren, on the boundless resources of the Almighty; when we look at the profusion of grandeur and beauty with which he has decked this visible creation; when we realize the exuberance of the delights and the wisdom of the dispositions that minister to our proper sense: who that has a mind not perfectly enchained to matter, will hesitate to admit that there may be a theatre of display transcending as far this immeasurable creation, as immortal mind transcends a clod of earth! and that there the all-sufficiency and goodness of God

may be spreading such a banquet for the holy, happy spirits that stand before his throne, and are so nearly assimilated to his own nature and perfections, as must mock the conceptions of the mightiest mind!

The language of the scriptures on this subject is certainly the language of the most chaste analogy; and they authorize us to expect a brilliancy of display, a stupendousness of plan, a profusion of variety and an intensity of bliss for which this same Paul could find no other designation than that of "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory." It was for this his ardent spirit panted; it was this that he had been labouring to get conferred upon such multitudes of his fellow men: and the prisons of Rome, and the sword of the executioner cannot be expected to have been appalling to the man whose only crime was his proclaiming among the nations this the most glorious gift of God, and whose speedy death would only hasten his own attainment of it. But Saul of Tarsus has not yet obtained possession of his crown. Happy and glorious as is the undoubted condition of "the spirits of the just made perfect," yet higher honours and more intense felicity are designed for them on that day when the Saviour shall reunite those spirits with their bodies, and conduct them body and spirit into the presence of his Father. It is then he will shed upon them his richest influence, and kindle their feelings into highest rapture. And that recompense reserved for them till after the general judgment is what the apostle calls "a crown of righteousness." You will not expect it of us, however, that we should draw the line of distinction between things equally unsearchable; or that we should sketch for you the import of those unutterable words which this apostle heard many years before his death, when caught up in vision into the paradise of God,

But though this consummation of his joy was so remote, it by no means follows his consolations were small, in the prospect of his approaching death. Though his crown must be kept back till after the general judgment, and though the full measure of felicity is necessarily delayed till that joyous occasion when the once agonized body can come in for its full share with the once suffering spirit: yet in the judgment of this same apostle the interval will be filled up with no ordinary felicity. It is far better, he declares, "to be absent from the body and present with the Lord," than to continue an afflicted and tempted dweller here. With joy then might that great and gallant spirit hie to that throng of the spirits of the just made perfect which once for a little moment he had been so blessed as to behold though not then permitted to mingle in their company. He well knew how speedily his toils would be forgotten in the presence of that master before whom happy spirits bow. He knew how he should mingle "in communion sweet" with hosts of mightiest seraphim; and exchange with all the loveliest of God's cherubim the ardent gaze of wonder and of love.

O! what were the frowns of a million Cæsars to an expectant of such bliss!! We sympathize no more with the sorrows of the prisoner; nor think his a gloomy case. Thy chain, apostle! was a richer dowry than the jewels of an empire! the taper of thy dungeon shot a ray more glorious than ever spoke the splendors of the full-orbed day!—Why that chain would adorn him when he went forth to meet the car that was coming down from heaven to transport the sainted hero to the presence of his Lord; and that taper shed its beams on a sallow-hollow cheek,

that you and I shall see, on a day not very distant, blooming in all the glories of immortal youth.

There abide thee, brother Saul, till that glad hour arrive when thou shalt come down from heaven to receive thy body, re-moulded by him whose grace has saved thy soul. Would God that I were with thee, and that all these were with thee, though we reached the same distinction by chains and floods and fires! Would God that all of us may come down with thee from heaven, and that the same loved hand may clothe us as we know he will clothe thee! Fools may deride this wish as a grovelling ambition, and cowards may shrink from the reproaches of the cross; but none will deem it folly in the day of God Almighty to have loved and prepared for the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Friends! you hope for more than to accompany our apostle when he comes to be fitted for the reception of his crown. You have the words of my text for it that crowns are provided for every sinful soul, that hears, like Saul did, the words of eternal life, and makes every thing subservient to the hope of salvation. Yet doubtless not in every case, such crowns as he shall wear. For while pardon and life are offered freely to every creature, and while the recompense of righteousness is freely bestowed on all, only through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ; yet doubtless that variety which lends a charm to all creation, and that endless gradation in dignity and happiness which characterizes creation through all its ranges of life and intelligence, even up to the "princeloms and dominions" of the skies, will subsist among the multitudes redeemed by Jesus Christ, as well as among the angels who kept their first estate. So this same apostle testifies in his first epistle to the Corinthians, when he compares the va-

ried glories of the righteous when raised up, to the variety which has place in the splendor of the stars. Be it then that all their honours are awarded solely through the merits of the Saviour; yet if there must be diversity in the awards pronounced, what standard so equitable for fixing the measure of distribution as that to which the scriptures every where refer us—the measure of our faith and services, while here!

Who then would aspire to the apostle's joy in death; and to a crown like his in the day of Jesus Christ? Like him let them avow and adhere to the faith of Christ: like him let them fill the stations which providence has actually assigned them, in the way that will best promote the cause of Jesus Christ: like him let them adopt as the basis of their whole conduct the great scriptural principle that "no man liveth, and no man dieth to himself; but whether living or dying, we are the Lord's;" and finally, let them cherish the grand considerations, that, while "all are not apostles, all are not prophets, all are not evangelists," all are equally bound to own the common faith and to obey the common law; and that of every one it will be required "according to that which he hath." Above all things be it remembered, that if Paul accounted all things but loss for Jesus Christ, and exemplified in his own person the Redeemer's parable of the merchant who gave up all to obtain the pearl of price; it is madness in us to hope the humblest crown in heaven, if we attempt to reach it by any other way: for straight and narrow still, as when the Saviour said it, is the way to life eternal, and few, it is to be feared, have the courage to enter in.

And now, my fellow mortals, you must make your own election. Prepared or unprepared, you must ere long

buffet that dark oblivious flood that rolls between mortality and the world of spirits. How stands your preparation for that trying hour? Do you calculate on finishing your course with joy; or shall the sun of your last day sink down and leave you to eternal night? Will a crown or a prison be awarded as your meed, when your spirit abides the scrutiny of that omniscient judge, who "is no respecter of persons?" You have glanced over the terms on which alone you need expect to reach the crown of righteousness. The difficulties, the sacrifices, the sorrows inseparable from a christian course are before you. Our apostle exemplified them in their most forbidding forms. Was a death like his a compensation for such a life? Or rather, was the joyous expectation of a crown of righteousness, a sufficient compensation for a death like his?—I have your answer! 'An hope like Paul's might well sustain us under any trials.' 'A death like his, and such bliss as he inherits, were cheaply purchased with whole ages of endurance.' 'Yes, we would be christians, if we could be like Saul of Tarsus.'

Then *be* like Saul of Tarsus! The Saviour whom he trusted, is the Saviour of our race; and the salvation he inherits, is the salvation which he preached. Multitudes, since the day when he bowed his head in death, have pondered his instructions, imitated his example, and at length yielded up their spirits as triumphantly as he did. "Go thou, and do likewise!"

To-day it is our blessedness to add another name to that great cloud of witnesses, whose ever-augmenting numbers multiply and vary and endear the proofs that the arm of the Redeemer is not yet shortened so that it cannot save, nor his mercies clean gone that he will no more be gracious.

Could thy voice now be heard, Margaretta Fletcher! amid the radiant throng that begirts the throne of God, though thou wert no apostle, but only an humble imitator of the apostle's faith and obedience, yet would every heart in this assembly feel it that other triumphs than those which gilded the last hours of Paul, may turn the scale in favor of salvation, and another and far weaker than that valorous hand beckon them on in the pursuit of the salvation they have chosen.

And even as it is, though no mortal ear can catch those words "unspeakable," which, if heard, it were unlawful for any man to utter; though no human sight can pierce yon empyrean, and scan thy cherub form joyously gliding over heaven's eternal plain; yet our eyes have seen thee, as we read of Saul of Tarsus, decided in thy choice and firm in thy profession; and our ears have heard thee, as we read of Saul of Tarsus, joying in thy last hours in the hope of immortality. Let thy life, let thy death, let thy triumph, my best friend, teach other friends how precious such an hope!

Margaretta Galbreath Nicholas was so well known to most of those whom I address, that any attempt at her biography must be considered perfectly out of place, even had we time for the fullest exposition of her short but interesting story. The lot of her infancy was cast in your own neighbourhood; and in your own town she spent the greatest portion of her days. Of her earlier days we have, therefore, nothing more to say, than that they were spent in a way which secured for her a degree of consideration and respect much greater, we believe, than ordinarily falls to the share of persons at her years. Many anecdotes which go to illustrate the firmness of her character;

the strength of her principles, her prudence, tenderness, and general intelligence, are treasured up in the memory of her friends. And to this little stock of precious recollections, it is happily in the power of your preacher to make additions. But be these the topics of those little circles with which the stranger does not intermeddle. It is her more public, it is her christian character, or rather, it is that same intelligence and excellence, as unfolded under the shadow of the Saviour's cross, that we are bound to-day to exhibit for your improvement.

The earlier years of Margareta Nicholas were, nevertheless, not marked by that best of all distinctions, the consecration of the roses of yer youth to God. The period of her youth was peculiarly unfriendly to the interests of knowledge and piety in this town; and we are not aware that much pains were employed to store her mind with the truths of revelation. Indeed we have it from very good authority that the skepticism which at one time deluged Lexington, had fixed its taint in the bosom of our friend. But a mind like her's, inquisitive, self-poized, and remarkably decisive, was not likely to hold opinions which must always owe their prevalence either to a want of knowledge, or a want of virtue. Still, however, she remained a stranger to "the hope of Israel," though in words confessing him; till it pleased God to visit her with severe calamity. The loss of the partner on whom she had reposed her hopes for life, was made the happy mean of driving her to him with whom alone the heavy laden can find rest. Far from home when calamity overtook her, far from almost every friend to whom her heart could turn for consolation, far from almost every thing that merits the appellation of christian institutions, in the city of Orleans, she raised her cry to heaven; and "the shield of the stranger," and "the stay of

the widow," hastened to become her helper. The event has fully proved that her's was not that common and contemptible mixture of mawkish sorrow and childish superstition, which, assuming the semblance of devotion's flame, dances its little month over the grave it came to consecrate, then fades with the fading recollection of its cause. No! from that lone hour to the last of her life, Margareta Nicholas appears to have thought and felt and acted as became a christian; and it is her's now to record it in the anthem which she sings that the affliction which pierced her young and widowed heart, though grievous for the time, was made abundantly productive, through the blessing of the Highest, of "the peaceful fruits of righteousness." Even then, though no professor of the religion of the Saviour, she had the courage to rebuke the laxness of many who had been far better taught, and rested the defence of her more rigid conduct and unbending views, on the written word of God. Thus early did she brave the "trial of cruel mockings," the common brand of that "cloud of witnesses," with whom she now associates!

Her return to the bosom of her family occurred during the erection of this little church. From that hour you were witnesses of her manner of life. You saw the lustre of those excellencies which had endeared her youth to many, chastened and brightened by the hope of immortality. Yet her's at first was a faint and lingering hope. It was but gradually that her views of the gospel of salvation became so clear and fixed as to minister solid peace. Meanwhile she was sedulous in the pursuit of christian knowledge. Her reading was principally confined to the most useful class of books: her attendance on the public ministrations of the sanctuary, was devout and regular: and

occasionally she so far overcome the scruples of a peculiarly sensitive and retiring disposition as to unfold at least a portion of her difficulties to some few christian friends.

But we cannot give the history of her religious life, short as it was, and imperfectly as it was scanned through the veil which her modest diffidence threw around it. It is enough that all the diffidence of a nature so very retiring did not unfit her for the conflict of the christian. On that she calculated; she made up her mind to brave it; and rarely has a character fallen under our notice that could boast so much decision and such cool discrimination, as we know to have been evinced repeatedly by her in the course of her brief profession.

“Cruel mockings” attended her at home, as well as in that city of the south: but these she endured, “as seeing him who is invisible.” The seductions of a more fashionable and liberal religion were presented to allure her: but her independent spirit collected from the bible the faith she was to follow, and mocked at the magic of a name. We might note the firmness with which she made her first profession of that faith; the respect she always manifested for the various regulations that guard the order and discipline of the churches; the unfeigned humility with which she always bowed to the authority of those scriptures which were from time to time suggested with a view to mould her course: but who can recount the half, or even the hundredth part of the excellence which every day will unfold in those whom God’s good spirit makes fruitful in every work of righteousness!

A thousand recollections crowd upon my mind, a thousand anecdotes might be recorded here, which afford such confirmation of a truly christian character, as must put to

the blush the proudest pretensions of a thousand modern "talkatives." But these must be reserved for the comments of that day, when a cup of cold water given to a disciple shall meet its notice and its recompense at the proper hand.

From the time at which she became known as Mrs. Fletcher, her lot was assigned her in a distant county. We know nothing of the manner in which she spent her time, during the year that saw her separated from most of her christian friends, and altogether deprived of the ministrations of the sanctuary. Doubtless she felt the privation keenly: doubtless she submitted to it as became a christian.

But it was not the purpose of the Father of mercies to expose his child long to the sorrows and temptations of a state like that. The time of her departure was at hand. A cold which she took, when availing herself of some casual opportunity of attending public worship, on an unfavorable day, at an unfavorable place, appears to have been the messenger sent to hasten her departure.

Her last illness was long and painful. Such indeed was its violence during the latter stages, that she was seldom self-possessed for many hours together. Yet generally, we are assured, her heart seemed to point to the Saviour whom she had followed, even during the wildest ravings of her fancy. And on him she would often call, and on one or two far distant christian friends, when in the extremity of her pain she knew none of those around her.— But all her hours were not of this dark hue. And when in full possession of her mental powers, and sufficiently free from pain to converse with ease, her conversation still gave testimony to the value of her hope, and to the bless-

ed reality of her christian character. "It is peace," yes, "it is peace," was the message which she sent to her distant christian friends, by one who hopes to know the value of such a blessing—"yes, it is peace;" and as she made up her little message, she mingled with it her tears. But thine, Margaretta, were not tears of bitterness!

Her's was indeed an interesting death-bed. It was mournful, yet pleasing to hear the lovely sufferer feelingly bemoaning the imperfections of her life; while she spurned the consolations which friends would have her draw from the irreproachable and even exemplary course she had pursued, and profess that all her hope was in the cross of Christ.—It was cheering to remark how sanctified affection prompted her to employ her little remaining strength in attempting to promote the salvation of her friends. O, who could withstand the interesting pleader, when with that wasted hand grasping the arms of some near relatives, her countenance all radiant with the hope of heaven, she with a feeble voice besought them to think of their salvation!—Nor may we number it among the smallest consolations of that scene, that the mere reading of God's word would stay the wanderings of her mind, when nothing else could fix it; and that one of the songs of Zion would soothe her chafed spirit, and compose her troubled countenance to a look of sweet complacency in the midst of racking pains.

When her last moments drew nigh, she was fully aware of her situation. Only three short hours were appointed her, after she recovered from that wandering state with which so many of her days had been afflicted. She felt that her end drew nigh. And at that interesting crisis she was left, like Bunyan's pilgrim in the valley of the

shadow of death, to tread the fearful path alone. There was none to pray with her: there was none to animate her. And, like the pilgrim, laying aside every other weapon, she filled up the measure of her journey with one incessant prayer.—Thus did she go down into the waters of that Jordan, calling on her dear Redeemer. And still as she went on, they, whom she was leaving on these mortal shores, could hear that much loved name pronounced in a fainter and still fainter voice; till at length the fashion of her countenance was changed, and —— Sister Margareta! where was then thy spirit!

Her prayer was heard: the arms of tender and everlasting mercy bore her safely through: and just on the shores of blissful immortality, angels and ministers of grace stood ready to give her fond welcome to the realms of light. Then all was peace, my friend! I have seen thee often, when clouded skies or winter's cold could not restrain thy footsteps from this house of prayer: I have seen thee weep when an appeal had reached thine ears, founded on the joy that circulates through the ranks of those same ministering spirits, if one sinful creature but consents to bow to the requisitions of the Saviour. And I have witnessed thy determination, humble but decided, to give that joy to heaven, by choosing the reproaches together with the triumphs of the cross of Christ, and setting thyself scrupulously to obey his word. Thou hast thy recompense! thou hadst it at that hour when angels descended to conduct the stranger to the presence of her God.

Yes, I record it in the hearing of this multitude, that she who did not hesitate to obey the word of God, without being deterred by the current of fashion, or seduced by the blandishments of those sophistical religionists who claim

the ignorant and careless as their proper perquisites, found the doctrines of that word an adequate support in the hour of her extremity; and joyously, but calmly, anticipated the moment when nothing that is written should be applicable to her, but those portions which portray her unalloyed felicity. It was her's, while on earth, honestly to fulfill for him its requisitions: henceforward and forever, it must rest with Jesus Christ to fulfill in her behalf its glorious promises.

Go, now, you who eulogize the virtues of our apostle, and sympathize in the gladness that sweetened his last hours—go and say that it is only for prophets and apostles to imitate the Saviour by attempting ready obedience to *all* the words of God! go, and flatter one another with the confident assertion that in these enlightened days there is an equally sure and much more easy way of entering into life! Be my hope, as thy hope, Margaretta Nicholas! “built upon the foundation of the prophets, and apostles; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone!” Be my aim, like thy aim, exemplary christian! to conform to that Saviour in the likeness of his death, that I may be transformed into his image in the likeness of his resurrection, when he shall come again!

May the blessing of the Highest rest on the example of our departed friend! May the relatives whom she loved fulfill her dying wish; and, like the family of the Pilgrim, become followers of her faith, now that she is taken from them! And may you, my dear friends, who have met with her so often in this house of prayer, inherit the full advantage of her bright example! May you be built up, like her, in the apostles faith; may you emulate, like her, the decision of his character and boldness of his profession; and

may you share with him and her the peace and triumph of a christian's dying hour: and after many years spent usefully on earth, may the tongue of friendship number you among the dead who are blessed, as dying in the Lord; who "rest from their labours, and whose works do follow them." Amen.

SERMON IV.

BIOGRAPHY OF ADAM.

“And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”
Gen. i. 26.

WHEN the great apostle of the gentiles would furnish his Roman friends and fellow-christians with the strongest inducements to the cultivation of a spirit of tenderness and disinterested kindness, he appealed to all that the scriptures have portrayed of the temper and conduct of our common Saviour; and wound up his appeal with these remarkable words: “for whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” The principle applies to all the biography and to all the history of the sacred volume, as well as to those parts of it which delineate the character of our first and firmest friend.

Whatever be the theme of the pen of inspiration; whether it record the virtues and the trials and the triumphs of the faithful, or delineate the attitudes and the end of vice; whether it pursue the footsteps of an individual, or mark the movements of a mighty nation: it is still the record of that Almighty Providence which encircles alike the archangel and the sparrow—the record of that providence which governs without respect of persons, and issues its awards by one unvarying law.

We have therefore a more than common concern in the delineations furnished by the sacred penmen. They unfold to us not only the deeds of other times, but the various motives by which those deeds were prompted: they often delineate the small beginnings of some new and extensive order of things, or trace the choice and the conduct of men to their remotest consequences; and while they thus detail the process which completes the web of providence, we derive new motives of attention from the thought that he who thus instructs us will not deceive and cannot be deceived; that his own agency has controlled the events he describes; and that while the principles of the divine economy remain unchangeable and our own nature unchanged, we may look on every event recorded as an encouragement or a warning; for he who has written impartially will judge and act impartially, and still awards to every one according to their deeds.

To-day we commence with the history of a personage from whose conduct our lot has taken a deeper tinge than from that of all other men together. Interesting in his relations as the great progenitor of the human race, interesting because the only sample of our nature endued with all its native dignity and intelligence and felicity, his history derives a deeper interest from the fact that he was the federative head whose hapless fall "brought death into the world, with all our woe."

The sacred history records few of the facts connected with the biography of Adam; those few however are of a highly important kind. We notice in the very creation of man a procedure which serves and was no doubt intended to mark with appropriate dignity the beginning of an existence to which was allotted a destiny so distinguished.

When God gave being to this universal frame, stupendous as is its mould and magnificent as are its decorations, the event was marked by nothing but the exertion of his power. He said, "let there be light, and there was light:" "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so." Even when he peopled it with all the classes of organic life, with beings which served to animate and were calculated to enjoy the beauties and bounties of the wide creation, there was nothing that announced a peculiar dignity in any of the creatures. He merely said, let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, and at the utterance,

"out of the ground up rose
As from his lair, the wild beast where he wons
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den:—
————— now half-appear'd
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts, then springs as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brinded mane."——

But man was distinguished by a more honourable birth. There seemed to intervene a pause in the Creator's work. The face of earth was animated with beasts and fowls and creeping things innumerable; all indeed was beauty to the eye and music to the ear. But while all could taste the bounties of the creation which they themselves contributed to variegate and animate, there was none to recognize their obligations to the Maker; none to mingle in that "communion sweet," which is the dearest exercise of the God of love. The production of one such being in whom thought might elicit thought and acts of kindness kindle kindest feeling—a being whose intelligence, whose moral sense, whose capacities of enjoyment, might furnish an adumbration of the great supreme—the production of

one such being would be a work more truly noble than a universe of worlds, though each were "one entire and perfect chrysolite." Such a being was intended; and the production was solemnized in a way that dignifies the history of no other portion of his works. The historian, in the first brief sketch which he furnishes, intimates something like a consultation among the divine persons previous to the accomplishment of this last and noblest part of the design. And here we cannot avoid remarking by the way, that we meet with an early and very obvious intimation of a plurality of subsistences or personalities in the divine economy. "God said let *us* make man," &c.

In the following chapter the historian descends to a more minute account of this part of the creation. As the production of such a being was made at first a matter of deliberation, so the accomplishment of the object was a deliberate work. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."—*Gen. ii. 7.*

The body was first formed. How elevated in its mould, how varied in its powers, how nice in its susceptibilities, how appropriate in its adaptations, let us learn from the noble ruins of our nature, now the prey of the elements and havocked by the passions for almost six thousand years. We can doubtless form but very inadequate notions of the grace and dignity of a frame that was created capable of flourishing in immortal vigor, and ordained the head and the masterpiece of this lower creation. But we gather something from what we are taught of the seductive beauties of the partner of his lot, the witchery of whose charms, as we shall hereafter see, wrought on him a spell more powerful than the earth has ever witnessed from that to the present hour.

But this form, however admirable, was still a lifeless mass, till "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." We trace at every step the memorials of new honours heaped upon our nature. Had man been created an animated being, however deliberate the process, there could have existed in his production no such indication of the spiritual from the material part. But in thus first preparing the receptacle of clay, and then afterwards breathing into it the breath of lives, we have a striking intimation not only of the absolute distinctness, but of the nobler order of that immortal part thus kindled into life by the breath of the Almighty.

We said God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of *lives*. So you will find it rendered in the margin of your bibles. And the correction is important. The word translated life is plural, and intimates not simply a diversity of attributes in the mind of man, but really a diversity of substance in the immaterial part. We are aware that this is a subject on which a great deal of obscurity rests. And it is scarcely possible to notice it without plunging into those controversies by which metaphysicians and pathologists have done little else than puzzle themselves and distract the world. We are far from wishing to render this pulpit an arena for controversy; nor do we think an attempt at biographical sketches a proper occasion for introducing all that might be said with strict propriety upon questions so intricate as those which involve the constitution of our nature. But as the creation of the first of men forms an interesting and instructive portion of his biography; and as the sacred page has given prominence to those intimations which regard the structure of his being, it is but right that, without indulging in speculations of

Our own, we collect the lights which the scriptures have furnished on this subject. He who made us best knows the constitution of our nature, and he has told us that the principle which animates our clay is the breath of *lives*.

The first and most obvious inquiry on this subject is whether man, considered merely as an animal, is not altogether material, and whether the breath of the Almighty, while it infused into his body an immortal spirit, did not at the same time, and by the means of that inhabitant, kindle into life his animal functions? This we know to be the most common idea; and it is generally backed by the assumption that all the inferior creatures consist of nothing more than organic matter, and that all their acts and all their feelings are to be referred to nothing higher than matter curiously organized. Now if this principle could be made out, we should have no difficulty in conceding that the breath of lives in our first father meant nothing more than the animation of the material part and the accompanying infusion of an immortal spirit. But we apprehend that the idea of mere matter being so organized, as to think and feel in any measure is contrary alike to scripture and to reason. The scriptures say that beasts have a spirit—a spirit that goeth downward, that perishes, at the moment of their death; whereas the spirit of a man goeth upward, and returns to God who gave it. And this idea certainly receives support from reason. For it is really impossible to conceive how mere organic matter can be the seat of those faculties which develop themselves in every part of the animated creation. We see the inferior creatures exercising choice, we know that they possess memory, we perceive in them imagination, for many of them obviously dream; and we feel that these are re-

sults that have no sort of relation to the mere movements and changes of organic matter. Motion is not thought, motion is not feeling, and yet motion is all that can be attributed to matter. We believe then with the scriptures that there is the spirit of the beast—a substance which is the proper seat of these sensations and perceptions and activities; a substance only affected by material things around it, when itself is so united with organic matter, that the laws of matter reach it through its tegument. Nor are we singular in professing this view of the facts. The apostle Paul distinguishes man into three subsistences, the soul, the body and the spirit, and prays, in the case of his fellow-christians in Thessalonica, that every part, “your whole soul and body and spirit,” is his expression, “may be preserved blameless till the day of Jesus Christ.” It cannot be admitted for a moment that such a distribution of the constituents of our nature should be made by the apostle, made too under such circumstances of solemnity, and yet be construed to mean nothing. In fact, the distinction here drawn is uniformly kept up in the sacred scriptures, both Old Testament and New. The word generally employed in relation to the principle of animal life, that seat of feeling and of the passions, and applied indiscriminately to man and to the inferior animals, is never used in connexion with the mention of those intelligent, moral and spiritual principles which form the attributes of our most distinguished part. In all such cases the same word is employed which is used to designate the nature of angels and of the Father of spirits. Nor is this confusion of the terms soul and spirit, so common, perhaps universal, in modern days, to be met with among the ancients generally. The Hebrews we see had perfectly distinct words to indicate

The different substances, and it is well known that both the Greeks and Romans preserved the same distinction. Nor will we be at any loss to verify the distinction thus established, if we will attend to the movements of our own minds. We really do find that we are susceptible of impressions, and capable of activities of kinds so very different, that they cannot be well referred to the same subject or to the same agent.

Between the perceptions of sense and the perceptions of intellect we can trace no imaginable resemblance. Every one can feel that the impulse to action which is derived from animal appetites or sensations differs immeasurably from that kind of impulse which we derive from motives distinctly perceived and intellectually balanced by the immortal spirit. So too we distinguish between the sense of pain as inflicted through the medium of the animal economy, and the weight that presses heavy on the heart, the keenness of disappointment, the sting of remorse, the anguish of a spirit that feels because it thinks, and the seat of whose pang is incapable of being referred to any sense or of being assigned to any place.

Let then the laws of mere organic matter, the laws of animal sensation and perception, and the laws of mutual feeling and discernment be distinctly traced, and we shall find that the three have nothing in common. To matter we can assign no properties but those of extension and motion; and all the changes in organic life, all that we see of the vegetable or animal, in so far as the corpority of the latter is concerned, will be found to consist entirely in such changes as result from the motion of the parts. But motion is not feeling, it is not perception, it is in itself neither pain nor pleasure. Something else must

be the seat of these. And that mysterious something that thus perceives and feels, and that acts from the impulse of perception and of feeling, is equally distinguishable from that orb of light, that spiritual, intellectual and moral existence, none of whose perceptions have any resemblance to sense, nor its emotions any thing in common with appetite.

Such then was Adam when he came a perfect being from the hands of his Creator. Constituted of three distinct substances, each one regulated by its peculiar laws, and susceptible of qualities exclusively its own, yet from their intimate combination mutually influencing and affecting one another, the sphere of action and the field of enjoyment was proportionably enlarged.

But it was that which distinguished him from the beasts that perish that constituted his noblest part. The intellectual, the moral, the immortal principle, which adapts itself with equal facility to every known department of the universe of God, which annihilates the distinctions of time and space and sense, whose existence is power, whose activity is thought, and whose substance bore the impress of the Almighty Maker—that was the capital distinction of our nature, and well fitted it for dominion in this lower world.

“In our own image, after our own likeness,” was the model proposed by the Creator when he planed this master work; and in his own image, after his own likeness the exalted nature rose.

You surely need not be told that this conformity of Adam to the image of his Maker had no sort of relation to his human form. Form is alone the attribute of matter. God is a spirit, an infinite spirit, present to all things, in whom

all things subsist. What has he to do with form? It was not the body, it was the immortal part of man that was framed in the image of his Maker. The renovation of that image in the fallen sons of Adam is frequently named in scripture, and is said to consist in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. And such was the impress borne by our first father. His understanding was unclouded; his perception of truth, and his power to combine it, so rapid and so strong that it was almost intuition. He knew his Maker, he understood himself, and he scanned the wide creation. Then did he resemble, though still in humble measure, that infinite understanding, that glorious orb of light which planned the whole creation, and whose immeasurable extent ten thousand such creatures never could develop.

But intelligence, like power, is always a possession of changeable character. It may be an ornament or a deformity, it may create admiration or disgust, according to the ends for which it is cultivated and the spirit in which it is employed.

Thus walked forth the lord of the creation, gifted with every great and noble quality that could elevate his nature or augment his happiness. But what were all the rich profusion of paradise and grand variety of Eden to Adam while alone. Solitary indulgence soon palls upon the sense. Solitary grandeur soon assumes the hue of gloom. Sameness of scene soon ceases to excite emotion; and from his daily employments—from his daily contemplations Adam's mind must soon have turned in upon itself, a lonely being, a melancholy blank in the universe of God. The inferior creation furnished no kindred spirit with whom he might mingle in communion sweet—the feast of reason and the flow of soul. A moment's amuse-

ment might be gathered from the contemplation of the various employments of the animated beings around him. The feathered tribes disputing with their fellows, the beasts of the fields mingling in gay and fearless frolic, might furnish sights of happiness altogether grateful to so benevolent a mind. But still the momentary sentiment furnished a suggestion, that the cooing of the dove, that the gambols of the herd only had a being because they were not alone. Had it not been for this, the ring dove, all tenderness and joy and animation, would have been seated like the raven on his solitary bough. Yes, creation, displayed these scenes of activity and happiness, because its various members were mated with their equals. But Adam was alone. He could lift up his heart indeed to that fountain of intelligence with whose image he was ennobled; but still Jehovah dwelt in the light that is inaccessible. A spirit housed in a material mould could not approach to God. And those occasional manifestations, such as he experienced in his first creation, could, from their very nature, only be occasional; the Deity would again retire within his own immensity, and all was deepest silence. Nor was Adam fitted for the constant society of those etherial beings who like himself were moulded in the Creator's image. They too are spiritual, entirely spiritual; and though they might occasionally clothe themselves with some material vestment, in order to commune with man, yet the assumption of such a dress is foreign to their nature; it removed them for the time from their common sphere, from their kindred spirits, from their common occupations. They must therefore soon lay aside their borrowed habiliments—then fading from his sense Adam is again alone.

If happiness be complete there must be kindred nature, endowed with kindred feelings. But "for Adam there was not found an help-meet for him." This want was speedily and liberally supplied the moment it was felt. Supplied in a manner the very best calculated to fill up the measure of his happiness. "And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."

SERMON V.

BIOGRAPHY OF ADAM.—(CONTINUED.)

“Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”

Gen. iii. 1.

IN the list of human crimes it is rare to find an item that has not obtained a place through the influence of motives not only specious but in their general nature unquestionably good. Sin has created no new source of happiness, it has opened up no distinct avenue through which pleasure may thrill home to the human heart. It is but the gratification of legitimate desires prized to excess and pursued in forbidden ways. It is but the perversion of faculties and affections from their temperate exercise and appropriate track, to the feverish, disorderly and disorganizing pursuit of pleasure, without regard to time or circumstances or the superior claims of more important occupations. Nor is it easy to conceive how mere gratuitous wickedness can exist in all the universe. The law of righteousness is deeply engraven in the breast of every creature; like the law of truth, its dictates are always natural; always uppermost; and as in departures from the truth there must ad-

ways be an effort to depart from righteousness, so at least it unquestionably is in every human being till a deliberate course of wickedness has sealed up to perdition by transmitting every temper into those of a fiend; and it is much to be questioned whether the great master of nature, who has ennobled our present theme in his immortal poem, did not strike the master-key of moral feeling when he represents the apostate fiend as planning the seduction of our hapless progenitors, but at the same time revolting from the idea of the havoc he was about to make, till he armed his resolution with suggestions false and feverish,

“————— and with necessity
 “The tyrant’s plea excused his devilish deed.”

It was to a principle laudible and highly useful in itself he addressed his temptation in the case of Eve: it was through a feeling most amiable and of legitimate exercise he reached the better fortified resolutions of Adam; and it was by giving way to feelings thus excited, that our unhappy parents fell.—For fall they did from their high estate of innocence and happiness, into what depths of pollution and wretchedness let all the world declare!

The story of this disaster is both short and simple. Surrounded as they were with every bounty of nature and furnished with every facility for making the most of these advantages; under one of the finest climates and in one of the most favored spots of earth—as the earth then was, before the judgments of the Almighty scathed it; with paradise for their home, the wide world for their inheritance; their was but one slight check upon the freedom of their wills, one solitary prohibition which was to mark their subjection to the universal ruler and prove alike the test of their fealty and love. “Of all the trees of the

garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

We are often asked by the captious or the confident why this prohibition of an indulgence in itself so very indifferent? And we are often compelled to listen to complaints of the severity of the judgment that awarded perdition to man and desolation to the earth for so slight an offence as the eating of an apple. But with how much reason you yourselves shall judge. Nothing can be more plain than the Creator's right to assign to his creatures any particular grade in the scale of being, and any particular privileges in the rank allotted to them, which he himself sees fit. Nor can any just claim be advanced for our continued possession of any of these privileges, or even for the prolongation of existence longer than he sees proper. This much the creation has a right to claim, that there shall be freedom from suffering while there is freedom from sin; and that he who creates us with appetites and wants shall provide in sufficiency the means of their indulgence. Because to inflict pain on innocence would be of the essence of tyranny; to create beings with appetites but without the means of gratification, would be only another form of providing pang for innocence, it would be adding cruelty to tyranny.

So long then as man remained without a law, he would have had a right to the enjoyment placed within his reach; but he could have no right to plead the continuation of his happiness, or even of the existence on which it was engrafted. This security must be conveyed to him either by an absolute promise, which also guaranteed his innocence; or it must be provided for by the provisions of a

covenant, on his adherence to which all his hopes were suspended.

It is sufficient for us to know that sovereignty and wisdom chose the latter course. Chose that man should make proof of his obedience, should earn a just title to eternal happiness, then reap the blessing as a meed from justice. Now what kind of obedience would be the best test of his devotion? obedience to the requisitions of the moral law? should he be tested by the commandment thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not bear false witness? Man was *created* in the image of his Maker: feelings of kindness were his natural feelings: to depart from the truth would require a strong and most unnatural effort. There could be no self-denial in abstaining from courses so opposite to the strong propensities of his being. There could be no kind of merit, no proof of his allegiance in doing by commandment what he did by nature.

The test must then be grounded on some indifferent thing, something neither prompted nor forbidden by his nature, that the commandment from God might be the alone reason of his course. It is madness then to say that the offence was small, because the trial was of so slight a texture. If but one tree was forbidden while the riches of paradise lay open to his grasp, then so much more gentle the trial that was allotted him—then so much feebler the temptation that might assail him—then so much fouler the ingratitude and daring the atrocity which for so paltry an indulgence would cast off subjection to the sway of the Eternal, and brave the fiercest of his lightnings. No, it was not a slight offence that thus snapped the bands that bound the earth to heaven, the hopes of the creature to the throne of God. And it swells in its proportions—it

deepens in its hues, because the temptation to it was of so little force.

Nor was this arrangement less favorable in its bearings than it was easy in its conditions. For though it is true that death was denounced upon violation of the commandment, yet life was as infallibly connected with its observance. The very fact that life was so secured, provided against ruin from any other quarter. Omnipotent grace then bound all other gates of death: eternal truth stood pledged to shield from suffering—infinite wisdom guaranteed man's innocence, unless it should be violated in this single way. It was the certain inlet to eternal life: guard this and God engaged that he should never fall. It was the only outlet to eternal death: neglect it, and ruin was the immediate consequence. Was it not then a dispensation most considerate thus to narrow the ground of human watchfulness; to reduce to a single point the question of obedience; and instead of leaving man to guard in his own strength the ten thousand doors by which death might enter in—instead of devolving on every child of Adam the task of working out his own title by such trials, and that amid the vicissitudes of childhood and of youth—was it not an act of kindness most considerate to try the destinies of creation by a restraint so very gentle, and that in a person so admirably fitted to give good promise of the issue. Nay, my friends, had that trial issued otherwise, it would have received far other comment from the sons of Adam. No man would have then complained of the bending of the terms. No language could have expressed our sense of so much kindness, while smiles of gratulation perched on every lip, and notes of joy and thankfulness swelled high from every tongue.

Indeed so secure were the terms of our eternal happiness, so easy of observance, and so unlikely to be violated, that the arch-tempter never hoped to compass Adam's fall by a direct proposal to exchange his noble prospects for a consideration so very paltry. Adam was too intelligent, his sense of rectitude too strong, his appetites too well regulated to admit a thought of his seduction by such a gross proposal. If assailed successfully it must be in some other way. That way was but too obvious. The noble creature who had been given for his help afforded fairer prospect in a first attempt. She did not stand like Adam the head of human kind. The same deep sense of responsibility did not rest therefore upon her mind. The command which entered deeply into the heart of Adam would press less heavily on her mind, because received under circumstances of a less impressive character, and probably only known to her as reported by her husband. Of judgment too less solid, there was far better chance to mislead her understanding: of fancy and of feeling more delicate and lively, there seemed an easier task to work on her ambition. And then, if in his temptation of the woman he succeeded, her agency bid fairer than all the considerations which either appetite or ambition might have prompted to work this fearful downfall. To the lively fancy and aspiring mind of Eve he accordingly addressed himself. But he must do it in a way that should not alarm suspicion. "The serpent was more cunning than all the beasts of the field which the Lord God had made." Eve would therefore be less surprised at strong indications of intelligence in such a being, and her suspicion would be far less likely to be roused by temptation from that quarter. Accordingly into the body of the serpent the temp-

ter wound his way. We will not detain you by fruitless attempts at answering the many idle questions that have been started on this subject. How did the fiend get there? Why did God permit it? Was it literally a serpent that was abused to this fell purpose? We know nothing of spirit except as we gather it from attending to our own minds; we know nothing of the laws by which spirit and matter may be so intimately combined. We know not the principle upon which the dictates of the will or swift combinations of the thoughts are uttered by the tongue. We who are daily doing it cannot explain our own procedure. How then should I tell you how this cunning fiend got possession of the serpent and framed his organs to a devilish use!—Why did God permit it? Why did he permit sin? Why did he permit misery to scathe the glories of creation and engulf its new-born joys? Tell me this; it is a fact spread before your eyes, a fact written on all records, graven on all hearts—tell me why God permitted sin and misery, and I will resolve your question, why he did not arrest the process by which the floodgates were hoisted to let this deluge in. But was it really a serpent that the seducer used? or did he merely himself assume the form of a serpent the better to impose on Eve? Was it really a serpent, or was it some other animal, an individual, for instance, of the monkey tribe, that was abused to this foul purpose, as some modern commentators, very learned and fanciful, are forward to persuade us? Yes, *it was* a serpent, really a serpent, and not the semblance worn. For we find afterwards that judgment was denounced upon the tribe; their appetites were changed, so that dust should be their meat; and from a posture more erect, as many imagine deprived of the use of wings, they were degraded like

reptiles to crawl upon the ground. This mark of disgrace upon beings merely abused to promote the purpose of the tempter, never could have been inflicted had he merely assumed their form. Nor is spirit susceptible of any corporeal form. We apprehend that the distinction between subsistences, corporeal and spiritual, is wider and more immutable than is generally supposed. We suspect that spirit never can be known to sense, except as it is enveloped in some corporeal tegument; and that the assumption of such tegument being above the laws of nature, no creature can change at will the manner of its existence, but must do so as by miracle, at the immediate commandment of the Lord of creation, and by the direct intervention of his Almighty power. We believe it was the body of a serpent that was occupied, and not a being of the monkey tribe. The assumptions on which this new notion rests are perfectly gratuitous, and directly contrary to every expression of the scripture. Of them it is not true, as it is of serpent tribes, that dust is made their food, because, from the progress of appetites formerly, no doubt, delicate, and from the prostration of their frames, they gather off the ground, they eat among the dust the food that sustains their being, dust becomes naturally mingled with their aliment—dust is made their food. This is not true of the other tribe supposed. Nor have monkeys been degraded to crawl upon the ground. For though it were admitted that they once moved erect, and now were prone to walk like four-footed beasts, yet a horse thus walks, an elephant thus walks, and would it not sound strange, would it not in fact be falsehood to say of either of them that they moved in the manner here expressed in judgment on the serpent—"Upon thy belly shalt thou go." It is the manner of serpents

of the other it is not. But why call it a serpent, if it was another animal? The word is just as definite as our English term; and if a dispute could exist about the ancient Hebrew, because we have but the one book written in that language, and of course slender means of fixing the real meaning; yet why in modern times the same idea kept up? Why in the Greek testament is Satan called the serpent in obvious reference to this old occurrence? In that language there can be no dispute about the meaning of the term; it would be just as reasonable to insist that our English word serpent designates a monkey, and not the reptile to which plain people apply it. In truth this fancy, so shallow and so useless, scarce deserves a moment's notice. Nor would we have noticed it at all, but that we might take occasion to admonish you how easily men suffer their understandings to be imposed on by the sound of learned names; how readily human vanity pursues its gratification in the adoption of singularities, no matter how unreasonable, in the annunciation of novelties, no matter how preposterous, merely because they are notions out of the common road. We believe that the bible, like all the works of God, is susceptible of farther and farther development; we wish to see no shackles imposed on freedom of inquiry into the meaning of all the word of God. We will honor that industry which elicits new discoveries of things useful and instructive, nor will we reject the decisions of independent criticism merely because they are new. But then let it be manly and independent criticism. The Deity is the being of first rate intelligence, and his word is common sense. The public should frown on these impudent attempts to sport with their crudulity. They should repel with unmingled and unremitting indignation these puerile suggestions, the

offspring, most unquestionably, of vanity or weakness, which take a liberty with the language and meaning of the scriptures, such as no man could presume to take with the writing of a man; and thus distorting their obvious meaning to fit the mould of fancy, distort all their history, annul their precepts, and insult the majesty and the memory of Him with whose book such monstrous liberties are taken. Yes, it was a serpent, 'more subtile,' says the scripture, 'than all the beasts of the field,' and its subtilty is to this hour proverbial among the nations.

Satan united himself with it, by what process ethereal spirits can tell, because its known qualities would best conceal the disguise and lull those suspicions which if once awakened must have been fatal to his hopes. It was in the absence of our first father he chose his opportunity; and very probably at an early moment after our first parents were settled in their home. Habit had not yet confirmed them in allegiance: experience had not endeared to them the possession of felicity: reflection had not matured the sentiments which sprang from feeling. All around them was novelty, all was surprise, all within them was the tumult of pleasurable feeling. Nor is it presumable that Eve was endued supernaturally with that extensive knowledge which adorned the mind of Adam. It was enough that he was so gifted. The gradual communication of his knowledge to his loved partner would itself be an employment of no mean delight; a delight which Divine beneficence might very well allot them to fill up many an hour of their comparative loneliness.

To Eve then the address of the serpent would not be so surprising. All nature was new to her; she knew not the first limits that distinguish its various tribes. But she

was an intelligent being: she knew well the commandment, touch not the tree of knowledge; she was a being formed in the image of her Maker; conscience testified the baseness of violating his prohibitions.

Hath God told thee, said the serpent, that thou shalt not pluck that fruit. Nay, thou shalt not surely die. "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil." It was an appeal to one of the strongest principles of her nature. Less prone "to enter upon thoughts abstruse;" less prone to prize those discriminating powers that form the greatest riches of immortal mind; less apt to be guided by that spirit of calculation, cold and slow and cautious, which governs the decisions and shapes the conduct of mankind at large, and which in mankind fallen often locks the better feeling in eternal frost; woman acts more from the impulse of her feeling. Exquisitely fine and exquisitely flexible, those feelings become the instinctive prompters of her thoughts. Perception with her, is almost intuition; in decision she is rapid, in expedient she is fruitful; her decision is made, her expedients are tried, her object is accomplished, while saturnine man, perplexed and calculating, lingers tardily behind; less apt perhaps to form erroneous judgments, but more tardy to execute where the judgment is decided.

These principles result in two features of female character strikingly prominent. The love of novelty is a common principle of our nature; in man it is more a principle of abstract speculation; in woman it is a *feeling* active and impetuous. Her active eye discerns ten thousand objects that prompt investigation, which man, more contemplative, would readily overlook, and her warm feelings seek

indulgence in the immediate search. Thus the love of novelty mounts up to curiosity, a highly pleasing, oftentimes an useful appetite, but an appetite restless and insatiate as the grave. Curiosity, the investigator of truth, the purveyor of the sciences, the handmaid of the arts, the mother of invention:—curiosity, the prompter to rashness, the harbinger of danger, the guide to ruin, curiosity was fatal to the mother of all living, and has proved the bane of myriads of her daughters.

Nor was this the only principle that operated with Eve. That fine and delicate sense which is wrought up to extacy by seeing, derives impressions no less lively and commanding from all the beauties and magnificence which lie open to inspection. It is that therefore which prompts to works of taste and neatness; it is that highly sensitive feeling which, apart from the more cold dictates of the understanding, shrinks back instinctively from grossness and unfitness; it is that principle which is really the guardian of taste and of decorum in the world. Man would be more careless, more rude and less aspiring, he would aim at fewer of the accommodations or of the elegancies of life, did not the finer and instinctive feelings of the other sex enforce a higher standard of attainment. But then that very principle which, from its superior delicacy, stands centry over the decencies of life; *because* it apprehends with exquisite discernment the charms and the advantages of profusion and distinction, may readily become a trap for the rectitude of those who cherish it, by transmutation into childish vanity, studying appearances only when they should weigh the worth of things; or by rising from a temperate and legitimate desire of distinction into the consuming fires of inordinate ambition. So fell our mother Eve. The

serpent had told her that if she ate that fruit, she should be as God, knowing good and evil; she saw in his work the trace of wondrous knowledge; her curiosity was raised; she should like to know what he knows. She saw in his creation the attestation of a grandeur vast beyond expression; her vanity took wing; she should like to appear as he did: Her ambition was on fire; she would be peerless as her Maker. Her informant had told her she should become as God, knowing good and evil. The experiment was an easy one, it was well worth the trying, she thought to be as God. But had not her husband told her that far different would be the issue of the perilous trial? Ah yes, but the serpent had just informed her otherwise; her husband might possibly be mistaken in the matter, for surely that kind, that gentle creature knew. But God himself had said it, in the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die. Should God be discredited and the serpent be believed? Why then the serpent had just now spoken it that she should not surely die. Most probably, my friends, she did not weigh these matters. The suggestion was a sudden one, it was tempting, it was bewildering. As yet she knew not evil, she thought not of any falsehood, in the whirl of curiosity, with the gorgeous imagery of all she was about to gain flitting before her eye; she thought not of her husband, she thought not of her Maker: she saw prospects far different from those which had been depicted by eternal truth, and, under the impulse of the feeling thus elicited, unthinking

“her rash hand in evil hour

“Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat.

“Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,

“Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,

“That all was lost.”

But where, meanwhile, was Adam? Him she speedily found. What were his emotions on the discovery of this deed, we can readily imagine, but no man may describe. You too are human. Depict them for yourselves. Fear not to let imagination loose. One thing is certain. Adam could not be deceived. The apostle Paul has told us he was not deceived. He saw at once the full extent of the calamity. He indeed was safe, but Eve was gone irrecoverably; Eve was gone forever. Now mark the husband of this rash and desperate woman, ye who imagine that holiness of heart is death to every tender and every noble feeling. The commandment was still unbroken by our federal head. He knew full well the calamity that must ensue upon the breach of it. Eternal felicity and eternal honors were full before his eyes. No, Adam was not deceived. He looked upon his partner, he knew the judgment of unbending righteousness. And now, what should he do? Why, wait the issue of the pending judgment. Why, wait till, Eve removed from paradise, God should cast him into a second sleep, and of another rib prepare another help-mate as fair and far more blessed. No. Such thing might not be. Another might be fairer, but still she was not Eve. Another might stand firm in everlasting bliss, warned by the fate of a hapless predecessor; but then she would not be Eve. She was the first, she had been the only object of attachment; and God has graven deeply in the hearts of all creation the memory of a first and honorable love. Times and circumstances and scenes may change. Other objects may succeed, other prospects may unfold themselves, but the memory never perishes of that first impression that thrilled thro' the trembling heart. No; Adam was not deceived. His Eve had perished, per-

ished without redemption, and he would perish too. We will not say in rash, but still in evil hour, he too put forth his hand. He plucked, he ate. No wonder if

“Nature gave a second groan,
“Sky loured, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
“Wept at completing of the mortal sin.”

It was done, and the decree of heaven went forth, “Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return.” But on that sentence we may not now detain you. We lock up for the present this guilty and hapless pair in that paradise now rendered a very prison house. On the morning of next Lord’s day, we will accompany them to judgment. To a judgment that was mingled with unutterable mercy, for eternal truth had sealed the doom irrevocable, “the wages of sin is death,” yet eternal mercy had itself provided a lamb for the sacrifice.

We reserve to the concluding stage of this biography, the various lessons suggested by this scene. There is only one to which we would solicit your attention at the present moment. Let the history of our first parents illustrate the remark we made at the commencement of this discourse. The great part of human crimes originate not in principles essentially bad, but in those which are just and proper in themselves, but only followed out to excess, or urged at improper times. And those pursuits in which so many make shipwreck of the faith, and those attainments for which so many barter the hope of eternal life, are for the most part matters quite allowable in themselves. We do not say, abstain from pleasures, because many are intoxicated by them; nor from the love of honest fame, because many sacrifice principle to it; nor from the diligent pursuit of business, because many are so engrossed by it

that they think of nothing else. But we do say that you are only safe when on the side of caution; we say that because a particular pursuit be allowable, it does not therefore follow that you should give it all your time—all your heart. There are other objects in the universe besides those which strike our senses; there are other pleasures provided that it is important we should cultivate; there are other duties binding to which we must attend; to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven; and that person acts as the veriest fool and madman, who overlooks the greater in attending to the less. How deeply was nature mingled with the motives of our first unhappy mother! How near to the supremacy of kind and noble feeling approached those emotions in the bosom of our first father, which wrought the mortal sin. It seemed so much a deed of unutterable tenderness, of exalted fellow feeling, that though righteousness condemned it, though we must condemn it as a judgment most unhal- lowed, that thus respected the creature more than the Creator; yet was it an act of such heroic desperation that we might almost imagine that when the recording angel wrote it in his book, such tears as angels weep ran rapid down his cheek, and blurred it e'er it dried. Let us then remember that the finest feelings and most innocent enjoyments may verge on actual crime. Let no single occupation seduce from other duties. Let us above all things commit the keeping of our hearts to God, now that they are deceitful and desperately wicked; and knowing that if we are wise, for ourselves we shall be wise; but if we scorn this needful caution, we alone must bear it,

SERMON VI.

BIOGRAPHY OF ADAM.—(CONTINUED.)

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. Gen. iii. 8.

It is a saying to which the experience of all ages lends its sanction, that we learn to estimate the value of our blessings mainly by their loss. There is but one object in all this universe who can completely fill the grasp of men's illimitable faculties; but one whom we can never love too ardently or pursue too eagerly. In whatever other way, about whatever other object the faculties are employed, they soon become familiarized with all that it affords; and contented only when the feelings are wrought up to ecstasy, we speedily begin to droop till some new pursuit is offered, and cast away from us like children the bauble we had gained. Thus we lightly prize the possession of our faculties, unless when something presents itself to keep them on the stretch—we esteem as nothing the ordinary privileges of life, the enjoyment of our health, the bounties of providence, the endearments of friendship, of the social circle, of the sacred hour; heaven's light beams upon us, and we discern it not; heaven's ambient atmosphere pours

in its warmth and vigor, and we feel it not; heaven gifts us with the liberty of council and of act, and we regard it not. The heart inured to the possession of these incalculable blessings still pines for something else. But if judgments like whirlwinds desolate our path; if sickness—if fever flame through the trembling nerves of man and boil along his veins; if poverty arrest him with its cold and iron grasp; if he be exiled from his family and from all his heart holds dear; if prisons immure him among pestilential vapours and shut out the light of day. Ah! then he sees no blessings are like those ordinary blessings which while they were his own were scarcely felt or thought of. He wonders at the care which clouds the brow of many who are in possession of all these things. And he concludes that if health and a home and plenty were restored to him, he would never—never more be discontented or unhappy.

Such, my dear friends, is the common history of man. When the heir of many privileges, all is disregarded in the pursuit of something else. When those privileges are forfeited, he feels and acknowledges that nothing was so precious as that which he cast away. Thus is human life one eternal round of ingratitude and regret. Ingratitude for the blessings placed fairly at our command; regret that we did not know them when they were all our own.

It was a lesson which our nature learned at an early day. Innocence was the glory of man at his creation. Surrounded with all the possession of heaven's bounty, it was innocence that guaranteed the possession of his happiness, innocence that kept in poize those well regulated feelings which rendered the heart contented and the happiness complete. While innocent, it was his privilege to

hold converse with high heaven; ethereal spirits were but his elder brethren, and might have often extended to him their visitations of love; all beneath the sun was subjected to his dominion; and there was nothing to hurt him, nothing that could destroy in all this universe.

But the loss of innocence was the loss of all. How suddenly and how rashly he cast this pearl away we said on last Lord's day. And now nothing seemed to await him but the infliction of the penalty. Eternal divorcement from the blessings he had forfeited, embittered by the sting of eternal self-reproach.

But we contemplate not only a change in all his prospects; we mark him degraded by a change of all his feelings. Beautified no longer with the charms of conscious innocence, he was no longer ennobled by the sense of conscious worth. His first impression was a sense of shame. "The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made shemselves aprons."

We will not consume time that may be far better occupied, in stating the many idle and whimsical speculations that have been indulged on this subject. Many are the devices and great have been the pains to account for the ignorance of this happy pair in relation to the circumstance thus said to have been revealed to them by the first transgression. We believe however that it is labour wasted to no kind of purpose. It is not a fact that they were ignorant on this subject, nor is it conceivable how they should have been. In the last verse of the preceding chapter this circumstance is alluded to, not as a thing unknown to them, but as a matter which in their state of innocence gave them no concern. It was guilt that was the parent

of the sense of shame; and the strong expressions which occur throughout this chapter, are sufficiently accounted for on the principle that the suggestion of any thing improper in this circumstance must have originated from some source very foreign from their own native and innocent conceptions.

It is more important to notice an objection to the representation of the state of innocence, that has been grounded on this circumstance. Variety of climate and of season, it is said, have their foundation in the order of things. There must always have been the winter and the summer; and how are we to suppose that such changes would have comported with the convenience of mankind, had they continued innocent, and spread abroad upon the earth? We have only to reply, that all argument drawn from the existing state of things, and applied to the former state, is perfectly out of place. Man knows very little of the economy of nature. And at this moment we well know, a perfect revolution on the philosophy of light and heat is taking place in the world. A revolution which affects equally the theories of the nature and of the causes of light and heat. If it be a fact, as is now admitted, that they are perfectly different things; if it be a fact, as is supposed, that the sun contributes neither, but merely gives activity, in some way not yet discovered, to the matter of light and heat with which our elements are stored; then no man may undertake to say that the intensity of either, or the absence of either, is necessarily dependent on the altitude of the sun under any given latitude, or on our nearness or remoteness from the centre of the system. For ought we can tell, the manner of both is connected with arrangements on which the sun beams only incidentally. For

ought we can tell, the Georgium planet, rolling as he does, 13,00 millions of miles away from the orb of day, may, nevertheless, be favoured with as brilliant light, and with as genial warmth, as ever fructified and blessed our equinoctial climes. But be the order and the laws of nature what they may, we cannot account for the sudden changes and highly various temperature so frequently experienced in one and the same place, during the same season, and to all appearance under the same general circumstances. Why then bring in our crude suppositions and half-formed theories—suppositions ever changing, theories perpetually new-modeling;—why oppose these flimsy and fragile things to the word of him who appoints the earth its seasons, who marshals all its elements, and who can change them at his will?

“The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.” Guilt unhinged their moral constitution, and strong emotions and painful suggestions, to which innocence was a stranger, now pressed upon their hearts. Thus did they verify the promise of the tempter. Knowledge of evil they sought for; knowledge of evil they attained;—they found it in the quick and painful sense of unutterable shame.

But the hectic that stains the ashen cheek of guilt is but one of many evils to which sinners are subjected. They were soon to experience a more commanding emotion than that from which they shrunk. Trepidation and terror soon succeeded to abashment. Their Creator, as he no doubt would have been often wont to do, assumed the semblance of humanity, that he might hold converse with his children; and they recognized the sound of his approach through the garden. There had been a time when their

Hearts would have leaped at the well known sound, and with all the alacrity of innocent delight they would have sprung to meet him. But that time was past forever. It is only innocence that can endure the glance of purity; it is only love, tender and confiding, that anticipates delight in the presence of authority. Let the remembrance of transgression press upon the conscience, and the self-accusing heart will make far other movement. Suspicion, like a dark and murderous fiend, now bounds into the seat of high-minded confidence, and every principle of the moral constitution sustains an immediate change. No mortal man can be in love with misery; he cannot look with complacency to the quarter whence he fears it. No creature in the universe can love its own dishonor; it hates as well as fears the scrutiny that would reveal it. Yes, suspicion sits enthroned as the veriest fiend in nature; it throws a sickly and heart-sinking gloom over the splendors of the day; the whole creation withers at its touch; and its breath converts the noblest feelings of the heart into sensations the most painful—the milk of human kindness to worm-wood and to gall.

It was with a feeling far other than that of licensed love, that this hapless pair recognized the footsteps of their former friend. Abashed and terrified, they shrunk back from his approaches, and sought concealment among the thick trees of the garden. But why should Adam shrink? Did he not know that it was the voice of the Omniscient? Did he not know that “the darkness and the light are both alike to him?” Did he not know that though refuge had been found ten thousand fathoms deep below the surface of the ground, yet distance is nothing; and no obstruction can be opposed to that penetrating glance which cleaves

the dark abyss beyond creation's circle, and ransacks the recesses of mind as well as matter? Yes, every jot of this was full well known to Adam. He had been created in the image of his Maker, with a high degree of knowledge as well as holiness of heart. But who does not understand how fear suspends the exercise of thought, and bewilders the conceptions of the mightiest mind? Who does not know, that the detected transgressor must be hardened beyond conception, when the discovery of his baseness, even in the very act, does not fill him with trepidation like the hunted roe, and leave him void of expedients as the silly dove? Experienced villainy is generally hardened villainy. The wretch who has succeeded in stifling his conscience, or who has been long accustomed to the development of crime, may cease to tremble, may be fruitful in expedient, with all his impudence and all his faculties completely at command, because he is a practised and a hardened villain. Such must be left to abashment in that hour when heaven's hoarse thunder shall urge the challenge home, and the avenging fires that flash from forth the throne, shed on his deeds their pale but piercing ray.

Our progenitor was not thus hardened in deceit. This was his first offence—it was an humble offence, it harrowed up his conscience, it stupified his intellect, and when he heard the voice of the Almighty, he obeyed the sudden impulse to spring behind the trees.

But there *is* a voice that can compel obedience even from a fiend. Let that voice command him, and however tardy, however reluctant, Adam must obey. See then this guilty pair move forward from their concealment slow and abashed. The first thought he exercised recurred to his shameful plight; the first sentence he uttered, was

a weak apology founded on that plight: "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." More than this he would fondly not have said. But his Maker struck the cord that vibrated to his conscience, and the whole truth must come out. "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" Mark now the answer of this desperate man: see how prevarication leads on to impudence; how ingratitude to God makes way for a spirit of unkindness to his creatures.

He had at first sought shelter under a prevaricating answer, attempting to explain things by telling half the truth. This would not do. The whole truth was extorted; his guilt stood confessed. How irreverent, how desperate was he rendered by that guilt! He next attempts to implicate his Maker: "the woman *whom thou gavest me* to be with me, she gave me of the tree." What an ungrateful, what a disrespectful recognition of the Creator's bounty in providing him that last, best gift. But it is thus that nature, once debased from its high estate, will stoop to any act of ingratitude and meanness. Adam is not the only man who has sought to escape detection by many a tortuous course, and who, when the fact has been proved beyond the possibility of denying, has laboured to extenuate what could not be excused; to involve parties the most innocent as accessaries to his crime; and even to sully the fame of heaven's spotless purity, by pleading its allotments as the predisposing cause of the abuse of all its bounties. You will not wonder that the man who could thus say to his Creator, you gave me the woman who has wrought my sin, you are yourself the cause of all this mischief—You will not won-

der that the man who could put such comment on his Maker's kindness, should strive still more to shield himself, by pointing the vengeance to his hapless partner's head. We saw, and we admired on last Lord's day, the great and gallant spirit of this man, while as yet he stood secure in innocence, and mourned his partner's fall. We celebrated the tenderness and the truth of that affection which knew no happiness but in connexion with the object of his love. But where is now that great and gallant spirit! Where is now that true and tender heart, which, forgetful of itself, of its privileges and prospects, would know nothing, regard nothing but the misery of Eve! Gone with the innocence that gives vigor to such feelings! perished with the expiring spirit of devotion. O let no one imagine that the person who spurns the kindness of his Maker, will long cherish real kindness for a fellow worm. That the heart which proves unfaithful to its Maker, can give a pledge of fidelity to any other being. Guilt not only renders desperate, it renders selfish too. And whatever men may promise, whatever they may feel while prospects are fair and the mind at ease, they will feel only for themselves when a horror of thick darkness begins to settle on the soul. Thus felt, thus acted our fallen father in this day of dread account. While innocent he braved perdition for her sake; but together with his innocence his fellow feeling fled. He could then think of Eve without thinking of her misery, he could add his accusations to the upbraidings of her conscience, he could hold up that object once too tenderly beloved, that as an ægis she might shield him from the arrows of the Almighty. "O, momentary grace of mortal man!"

But we must hasten through this trial. The answer of

Eve furnished likewise an apology, but an apology containing nothing but the truth: "the serpent beguiled me and I did eat." The serpent, or rather he who abused the serpent's organs, had no apology to offer. He was already recognized as an old offender; his motives were quite obvious. It was hatred to God, a wish to deface his new and beautiful creation, and a desire to soothe his own hopeless anguish with the sight of similar anguish in his dark abode. But to him the judge would not deign to put a question.

And now, the guilt made manifest, the only remaining step was to award the judgment. The first decree was issued against the serpent; say against the instrument of this sad disaster. His appetites were changed and rendered gross and indiscriminating; from a nobler port he was thrown prostrate to crawl like reptiles on the ground, and irreconcilable enmity was decreed between him and his fellow creature man. "He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise its heel." All this has been fulfilled. All this has been accomplished. We know not now the former condition of the serpent tribe. But we do know that his gross appetites seek their supplies upon the ground; we do know that he crawls like a reptile on the earth, and that dwelling in the dust, and feeding in the dust, dust unavoidably becomes a portion of his food. We do know that the serpent often inflicts his mortal bite, and that man who fears and hates him often succeeds to crush his head. But the denunciation here uttered had a twofold application; it struck likewise at that more cunning and malignant being who was identified with the serpent in the commission of this crime. To that circumstance we will be at liberty to advert in due time. Mean-

while it may be asked, what offence had the serpent tribe committed, and why were they degraded because of another's crime? We have only to reply, that the unintelligent creation are not properly in any case the subjects of moral government; if they be involved, it is only incidentally, and the degradations they suffer are incidental too. Meanwhile it is clear that on the serpent tribe no positive wrong has been inflicted. God assigns and may assign to his creatures any rank he pleases in the scale of his creation. Man may not complain that he was not made an angel; nor the oyster that it cannot cleave the ocean like the dolphin, or soar like the eagle high against the sun. If the serpent were lowered in the scale of creation, its appetites were lowered too. It recognizes no change, it feels no loss. Meanwhile to man there is taught an important lesson, which God had a right to employ his creatures in illustrating. In fact this dispensation but conformed to a very general law, that every object, animate or inanimate, which has served to promote the purposes of sin, shall serve also as a memorial of God's holiness and justice. Thus was the fruitful vale of Sodom reduced to a bitter and fetid pool: thus was Babylon, the great patron of idolatry and the great seat of oppression, rest of all her glories, and rendered the habitation of every doleful creature: thus shall Rome, "the mother of abominations," be consumed with fire, then sunk like a millstone into the depths of the sea: thus was this whole world visited at one time by an overwhelming flood, which buried in one vast ruin not only man the offender, but every work of man, every thing in nature that might perpetuate in any way the memory of his crimes. And thus we are taught that another day approaches in which the keen search of all-devouring fire

will leave nothing unvisited, nothing unpurified which man has polluted to the purposes of sin. So that while man is summoned to his last account, while man is startled by the braying of heaven's loud trumpet, his mother earth, the seat of his manifold enormities,—earth racked in her bowels and wrapped in sheets of flame, shall toss and bellow like a stricken whale. According to this rule was the judgment of the serpent.

But the punishment of him who actuated the serpent was more pointed and severe. Between him and the woman's seed God announced perpetual enmity. He had succeeded indeed in involving hapless man in the guilt of his rebellion; he had taken a ready way to deface all the glories of this lower world; and he might suppose that his triumph was complete. That he and man united in rebellion and bound together in one common lot of misery, might together lay such plans as fiends may execute, and point their united efforts against the throne of God.

Nay, says the judge, let not the tempter think so. Infinite wisdom shall confound this dark array. Infinite mercy shall break this league of wickedness. Man shall yet be linked in confederation with his Maker, and proclaim eternal enmity against his foul betrayer. This creation shall be rescued from the grasp of destruction, every vestige of its sin shall be destroyed; and redeemed, repaired, and more than ever beautified, she shall roll on in her course among the stars forever. And God, against whose honour this rebellion had been pointed; God, whose wisdom it was intended to render questionable, and the glory of whose goodness it was calculated to obscure, by pointing his vengeance against the creatures of his hand;—God the all-sufficient shall retire from this contest, better known

and more beloved by all orders of intelligence, not only as the Being of immeasurable resources to correct and to control the mad efforts of his enemies, but as the God of unutterable tenderness, of unequalled fellow-feeling, and of a bounty that knows no bounds.

No, let not the tempter suppose his plans successful. Cunning as he is, that being must be cunning far beyond his measure, who by tortuous courses can outwit Omniscience. Strong as are the bands that now bind men and angels in one common interest and feeling against their Maker, these bands must be stronger ten thousand thousand times, or the arm of the Omnipotent can never fail to sever them.

No, let this foul fiend who now triumphs in his success, return to his den, carrying with him this assurance, that if cunning taught him to compass man's destruction in the body of a serpent, wisdom enables God to work out man's salvation in the person of a man. That if fellowship in guilt and in the destinies of misery have made man the friend of Satan; fellowship with the Messiah, and a share in all his triumphs, shall make man the friend of God. Yes, let that tempter go, but not rejoicing in his momentary triumph. Let him bear with him the intelligence down to lowest hell, that his folly has prepared for man a higher destiny, and for God a nobler triumph and a brighter fame, than could ever have been their's had man moved unseparated in the paradise below, and had God our Saviour never left his throne on an errand of unutterable love. He has only provided for an illustrious triumph, when the lawful captive shall be released from his possession, the prey of the terrible wrested from his bands. For a while he may succeed to inflict on us many sorrows. Often may he pain us; he may even shoot pang into the bosom of

Messiah, when he darts his poisonous fang into the heel of man. But Messiah shall arise from the stroke of temporal death; his redeemed shall all rise in immortal youth and vigor, and the universe shall judge to whom appertains the wisdom and the victory, when man thus risen lifts against the serpent his now invulnerable heel, and crushes his audacious head. Such was the judgment denounced against the tempter: a sentence conveyed in highly enigmatic language; but which you will find as we proceed through this course was still more and more explained. You know the way in which it has already been fulfilled. You know what myriads have broken league with the tempter, and have exerted every nerve in the service of his great and good antagonist. And heaven could now unfold to us, were our eyes but strengthened to pierce yon empyrean—heaven could unfold to us her congregated hosts, redeemed from every country, the saved of every age, inheriting far other home than what the tempter had anticipated; now the objects of his envy, but no more of his attacks.

We must defer till next Lord's day, the judgments pronounced upon the other culprits. Nor have we time to add more than a single reflection upon that which we have reviewed.

Deceit is the great weapon of the adversary of God and man. Deceit—cunning—the sly insinuating course is the common result of all who attempt improper objects. Let the sons of cunning learn that deceit will never prosper under the government of God. He is the defender of the right, he is the avenger of iniquity. “The shield of the stranger, the father of the fatherless, the husband of the widow, the champion of the oppressed.” All this he has undertaken. Will he neglect his charge. Let no man

then glory in the success of his craftiness. He must be artful indeed if he circumvent Omniscience; he must be mighty indeed if he break those toils which the hand of Omnipotence is pledged to cast around him. Like Satan he may triumph in a momentary success; like Satan he will discover that his triumph was premature. Let no good man cultivate a crafty plotting spirit. If his object be a good one, it needs no such dubious aid; if it be a bad one, he ought never to pursue it. Let no pious man fear the machinations of the cunning. God is the protector, he has pitched his infinite wisdom against the arts of the deceiver; you have only to stand still and see his great salvation.

Let no great and gallant spirit demean his lofty feelings to point plot against plot, or to answer wile with wile. Freeborn sincerity is the attribute of nobleness. If he must act on the defensive, let it be in the light of heaven. Innocence is the native and the strongest fort, of courage. And one single effort made in the strength of innocence will do more solid execution than ten thousand policies. An arrow thus shot will designate its course like lightning through the skies; it will fly terrific and decisive to its aim, as the thunderbolt of heaven. Ours then be the prayer of the deep reflecting psalmist, "remove far from me the way of lying:" and let all our conduct be modeled on that prayer.

SERMON VII.

BIOGRAPHY OF ADAM.—(CONCLUDED.)

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”
Gen. iii. 16.

“YE know not what will be on the morrow.” Such was the sound and seasonable suggestion of one of the apostles to persons too much busied in sketching out plans for future operations, while regardless of the privileges and un- mindful of the duties of the present hour. We need not say to you that this same suggestion has been equally appropriate and equally seasonable in every succeeding age. From the humblest cottager up to the master of empires, all human beings are prone to occupy themselves in sketching plans for futurity. Plans predicated on the stability of their present possessions, or on the security of those objects which they have in prospect:—Plans that have no value but as connected with to-morrow; and yet to-morrow belongs not to the projector. What lessons are we taught on the instability of human things! When we pass by the grave of genius, prematurely struck off from the lengthening roll of fame; when we pass the grave of the eager and successful man of business, hurried away from

his occupations e'er he had half reached the point to which they were directed; when we look on the termination of any one career, no matter what, by which our attention had been arrested, we concede "in sober sadness" the instability of human things; and sighing, say to the now inactive slumberer, O, if thou hadst known, even thou, how soon and suddenly thy career must terminate, how different the prospects on which thine eager eye had bent! how different the objects that had engaged thine efforts! But why refer to the lessons of many ages? Why pry into the hearts of eager multitudes pressing forward to a goal which few of them will reach, and intoxicated with prospects which they shall never realize.

We have before us in the history of these first of human kind a far more interesting and pointed lesson on the instability of human things, than any other that can be exhibited from the records of our race. Let your eye rest on this mother of all living. In the morning she walked forth the mistress of creation; how exquisite in beauty, how lovely in her innocence, what lustre in her eye, what grace in every step, they can best instruct you who know how God *can* beautify and dignify his works, and whose hearts are most alive to the power of female loveliness when consecrated by intelligence and purity of heart. We know very well that there is no object in creation—no, neither man nor even angel can levy such a tribute as woman may extort when in any measure resembling the creature God first made her. It is not so much the lustre of surprising beauty, it is not the lofty port of all-confounding intellect, it is not the sentiment of pity for weakness and dependence:—it is nothing of all this that constitutes her power. It is that mixture of intelligence and loveli-

ness and tenderness; it is those ten thousand nameless beauties too exquisitely delicate to paint, too variant to delineate, and too *rare* to have names in our common-life vocabulary, that constitute the inexplicable, the unutterable charm. We have recognized and we yet do homage to the lineaments of these perfections in a few of her many daughters: but the mother of all living inherited them all. She was the first of this new species in creation, and it was proper that she should exhibit what it is in the power of God all-sufficient to create and to combine. See her, then, walk forth on the morning of this day; modest, but yet not bashful; dignified, but not repulsive; beautiful, but not vain. Is it wild to imagine that her husband would gaze after her with unutterable tenderness; that the tenants of the garden would bow before her as she passed in fondness mingled with inexplicable awe; and that even the inanimate part of the creation, the tender blade of grass, the flowret and the shrub, bending as they were beneath the dew drops of the morning, would bend in lowlier homage as she moved.

And did creation furnish to this loveliest of God's creatures no reflections of her own! Yes, for she had feelings exquisitely wrought; every feature was brightened by the glow of feeling, every pulsation darted pleasure through her frame. Yes, she had a mind most intelligent and lucid; she could not but be alive to the blessings which enriched her; such a mind must dwell on the prospects spread before her. Bright were her anticipations of many coming years. But they were anticipations never to be realized. A few short hours have flown, and you see her now. See her arraigned, a shame-faced, guilty and despairing culprit, an unprincipled seducer of her once

noble partner, the corrupter of innocence, the destroyer of happiness, the exterminator of those beauties of which she had been the crown.

But we commented on her offences in a former exercise; our theme is the judgments which so speedily avenged them. We need not say to you that nothing more than a very small portion of the evils she inherited are delineated in this sentence. We know that in all countries, whatever be the curses that smite the earth, whatever be the woes or degradation of our nature, woman still comes in for her proportion of the penalty. But this judgment had respect to her distinctive penalty: it struck deep into the sources of *female* happiness; and it marked her for an anguish peculiarly her own

Whatever the reigning fashion, or the obtrusive gallantry of a false philosophy may teach us, nothing is more plain than that the scriptures teach us by the whole current of their precepts and examples, that the proper burden of female occupation is of a *domestic* kind, and that the sources of her felicity, as designed by her Creator, are mainly to be sought for in the domestic circle. Solomon in his proverbs does mention women who are "loud and stubborn," and whose "feet abide not in their house:" but then he names them with marked disapprobation. The apostle Paul also describes a female character, such as is both useful and happy, but then it is a character of very different stamp.

Yes, whatever a false taste, or a false gallantry may dictate, the tender sensibilities and retiring modesty of woman was designed to render home a paradise, and fit her to derive the principle share of all that deserves the name of happiness, from the circle of her home. Those affections, so tender and so exquisitely moulded, will wither

beneath the ray of the noontide sun; those thousand—thousand graces that play upon the cheek, so timid and so tender, will fly away forever, if tortured with the noise and the bustle of the crowd. No, let them throw their magic around the domestic circle; let them expand and shed their fragrance upon the circle of her friends, in those moments of social and of happy intercourse, where heart meets heart, and where every countenance beams confidence and love. Let them be cherished as the source of blessing to her children, and let the returning fondness of her innocents be as the re-action of blessedness upon herself. Thus was woman formed. And she cannot alter the laws of her Creator. These are still her resources where she is really happy, and it is upon these that the penalty is hung. Yes, a mother shall be happy, beyond what tongue can tell in the caresses of her babe. But oh, what agony has this penalty affixed, as the price of all this happiness! An agony which has no parallel in nature: an anguish so keen that the scriptures recognize no term so fit as that to paint the anguish of accursed spirits. To her husband her thoughts shall still recur; on him shall the eye of complacency be bent. Nor is there any thing in nature that attaches itself so strongly as a really amiable and uncorrupted woman attaches all her heart to the husband of her youth. Not only to the worthy, to the attentive, to those who repay affection with return. But how often has it been seen, that when vice had degraded, when villany had dishonoured, when crime had involved the existence of a man; though friends have deserted, though brethren have disregarded, though parents have disclaimed the convicted culprit as the dishonor of their blood; yet a wife has forgotten the ill-treatment of many years, has forgotten the wrong committed against her peace, has forgiven

the disgrace entailed upon her children; and has followed to the prison and to the gallows tree, remembering only that he was her husband, and that he was about to suffer. Yes, her desire is still toward her husband. Patience and tenderness are still the palm of woman.

But that husband—how does the judge say that fidelity shall be met. Be met too often with unfeeling coarseness! Be met with a selfish and tyrannical spirit, that shall sufficiently mark him as a creature most debased. We appeal to all nations, we appeal to all ages, we appeal to the votaries of all religions. What is the state of woman, and what is her standing among Mahomedans and Pagans? What is thy condition, daughter of Eve, in every country under heaven, where the glorious gospel of the blessed God has not elevated the morals and softened the feelings of more powerful man. Thy husband rules thee——“with a rod of iron.” Cherish then the interests of the gospel of salvation. Bow to its influence; circulate its fame. That only can relax this penalty of crime, and convert the sulky and the selfish tyrant into a kind and noble-hearted man.

To man, thus fallen from his high estate, fallen from the tenderness and nobleness of uncorrupted feeling, the Judge now turned himself. But he did not utter, as in the case of Eve, the denunciation of the penalty in a single sentence. Adam had offended with a still higher hand, against greater light and higher obligations. The Judge dwells upon his sentence, varies the delineations, crowds the terrific scene, speaks in succession of sorrow and of labour and of death, till the astonished culprit might have well exclaimed, in the language used by one of his descendants, “deep calleth unto deep; all thy waves pass over me.”

“Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou

eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return."

You never saw this world, as Adam saw it. You know nothing of that period when all the creation shewed a willing and a cheerful subjection to his sway; when the elements of nature were sweetly attempered, and when the earth seemed cheered as with one perpetual spring. But you do know much about the sad reverse here so faithfully portrayed. We need not tell you that the elements of nature often exert their mighty forces to strew desolation round. You have seen whole tribes of this creation armed against the life of man; you have heard of pestilence borne upon the wings of the wind; you have seen distress and perplexity overtake all ranks and ages; hoary hairs without consolation or resources; the face of youth and innocence bowed down to the ground with sorrows; you know, in one word, that no condition is exempt from pang.

Nor need we tell you of the toils to which our nature is subjected. Almost every thing that ministers to the life of man is now procured with toil; the ingredients of his comforts must be sought with many cares. Let him choose what spot he may, under climes of any temperature, in soils of any quality, his portion is still the same, "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Does he seat himself in the fruitful vales of Sodom? Does he prepare to sow his seed in soils such as that which blesses our own favored land? Need we tell you that the finest soil and happiest climes will pour forth of their exuberance, but it will be the rank and rapid growth of weeds and nox-

ious plants, injurious to every thing connected with the comforts of his being. The thistle and the thorn, the ironweed and nettle, hundreds upon hundreds of similar noxious plants spring up unsown, flourish uncultivated and unless often displaced by long and painful labour, impede and destroy the more delicate productions, which minister food to man. Thus the showers of heaven descend, but it is to weeds they impart new vigour; the tropical sun shoots down his beams, but it is the seed of weeds that ripens. But this is only the heritage of a fertile soil; men may seek the means of living where their cares will be less encumbered by these unwelcome visitors. *They may do so*, but then it is in lands whose scanty vegetation insures a toil by no means less arduous; toil to procure a mere meager subsistence from lands so poor, under climates so inhospitable that the hardy and obtrusive ironweed or thistle can scarcely find a foothold. Yes, the earth has been smitten with a curse, and left to herself she expends her strength on vegetables that minister toil but no nourishment to man. He must labour—and if he choose another occupation, yet still the earth produces not spontaneously, others must cultivate the ground for him, and he must toil for others in some other way, that he may share with them the product of their labours.

But why attempt to delineate what you all know very well. This world of ours is too well known as a place of care and labours, too often does the bursting heart throb with woes unspeakable, too often does it sicken with loss and disappointments, to permit any to call in question the sentence of that day when man became an outcast from God's fair paradise. *****

SERMON VIII.

BIOGRAPHY OF ENOCH.

“And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah. And Enoch walked with God, after he begat Methuselah, three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years. And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him.”

Gen. v. 21—24.

“YOUR fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?” This was the reflection borne home by one of the prophets on the disobedient and perverse of his day. And if ever there were an appeal calculated to pour contempt on the crooked and short sighted policies of man, this is that appeal. What avails now to any of the fathers the memory of departed joys? These are only “soft and pleasant to the soul” as they ministered to the character of their eternal state. Of what avail to you, when one hundred years go by, will be many of those successes which now give most delight; many of those objects about which you feel the deepest interest? Early very early was our race compelled to learn that their greatest interests have little to do with time. Speedily did the winding sheet give lectures on the tenure by which we hold our portion in the present life; and the lips of many

a corpse, pale and cold in death, uttered lessons on the magnitude of our eternal interests more impressive and commanding than arch-angels tongue could speak.

Years rolled on; and though in the earlier ages of the world human life was protracted to a very great length, though men might count their centuries more frequently and more abundant than we can now sum up our tens, yet successive years will speedily make up their thousands; and almost as soon as the first generations began to blossom for the grave, an occasional comment would be year by year occurring on that first denunciation, "dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Suppose then that now, in the earlier times of Enoch, many had bowed to their dwelling in the dust. Suppose Adam and his Eve gone to join their son in Paradise. And Cain already summoned before the last tribunal.—The spirit of piety perished not with Abel, nor with the father who had taught him. A bright succession of patriarchs and good men kept piety alive on earth. Each in his turn was made acquainted with the promise, and each in succession declared it to his children that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head."

Thus while the dust again mingled with the dust, the promise and the sacrifice taught them to expect salvation; and they knew that the spirit returned to God who gave it. But we are no where told that they knew any more. And while the bosom of piety imbibed many a serious lesson from the examples of mortality occurring all around it while it was guarded from temptation and solaced in its sorrows by the thought that its own turn would in due time come; still nature, ever true and strong in its attachments, must have felt for the tenement of clay. They

saw the bodies of their fellows committed to the ground; and they saw them not again. Or if chance sometimes presented them a mouldering bone, it shed at best a dubious and discouraging light on that interesting question, "son of man, can these bones live?"

Gradual evolution is the plan of God. It is in regular gradation he unfolds his purposes; it is by little and little he builds us up in hope. If the first generations knew more than we have supposed, if they were led to gather some indistinct conclusion from the shadowy language of that first great promise—yet still they had seen nothing in illustration of the promise. Over the tombs of the fathers the green grass waved unmolested. All was silence, all was fettered there. But infinite goodness takes knowledge of our frame, and remembers we are dust. It is seldom that he suffers faith and patience to endure very protracted trials. And if he once arise to crown his saints with blessing, if he would fortify their patience, if he would irradiate their hope, his munificence will be attested by no partial exhibition. If illustration be his object, there will be a flood of light, if piety be recompensed, there shall be "showers of blessing."

He now arose to speak to men of "the resurrection and the life;" and he did not barely pledge his truth that the slumbering dust should rise; he afforded to the world a proof upon experiment that flesh and blood may enter into paradise. Enoch was the person selected for the proof. And though the principal object centered in the illustration and confirmation of the hopes of piety in that and succeeding ages, yet it was highly proper that inheriting a distinction and a blessedness so signal, as to be translated without death for the advantage of the world—it was proper that

the person selected for such a service should be in some sort worthy the unusual lot.

Of such a distinction Enoch was deemed worthy. There are but few traits of his character, or circumstances of his life recorded in the scriptures; but the few there found are of a stamp decidedly favorable. On casting your eyes over this chapter, you will discover that he occupies a place in that long line of worthies through whom Messiah traces his descent, with respect to his humanity, and by whom a sense of piety was kept alive upon the earth. Enoch, it would seem, chose a partner for life at an earlier age than was usual even among the patriarchs; and in doing so, he has furnished one among the many proofs how readily and how perfectly piety allies itself with all the blessing of the domestic circle. Far very far from the spirit of christianity are those cold and selfish and unsocial feelings which multitudes have cultivated and still greater numbers advocated as the ingredients of genuine piety. However true it may be that strong and peculiar cares, such as were exemplified in the dangers and travels of the apostle Paul, may justify and even recommend such a course, yet nothing is plainer than that a spirit of monasticism is as foreign from the principles inculcated in scripture as it is baneful to the tenderest charities of life. The idea of retiring from the world, and of abstaining from all the relations and interest which necessarily arise out of wedded life, in order that God may be loved and honoured more intently, because nothing divides the heart with him, is far from being in harmony with that apostolic maxim, that he who loves God will love his neighbour also. For attachments lasting, strong and tender, christianized feeling is the most proper soil; there true happiness may be chiefly anticipated, be-

cause vicious courses do not corrupt the heart; and there that happiness promises to be lasting, because vicious excesses do not petrify it.

It has been often remarked in relation to the Saviour that his domestic feelings were peculiarly strong. Numerous as were the calls of duty and of mercy which threw him into the midst of overwhelming multitudes, much as his heart was devoted to the more extensive and public duties of his mission, and indispensable as it was that he should be occupied among the crowd, or always on the wing,—yet this constant round of occupation and of travel, did not weaken his social feelings, nor abate his fondness for the unostentatious felicity, to be gathered in the bosom of the little circles who knew him best and loved him most. From all the glare of public exhibition, and from the noise and gratulations of admiring thousands, we find him retiring upon every fit occasion to the humble circle of his loved disciples, or turning in to partake the affectionate attentions of Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus, his friends.

And he too—when the hour of his sorrow came, with what expressions of genuine and of simple-hearted feeling, did he give vent to his feelings in the ears of his disciples, simple and rude men! The lustre of the achievement he was about to accomplish, the incalculable glories he was about to reap, the elevated character of his station and his feelings, did not do away the simplicity of nature. His heart recurred in sorrow to the sympathies of his friends, and while angels were intent, while earth and hell was moving to accomplish the dread sacrifice, while heaven itself was binding the cords around the victim, he turned him to the few who had followed him and loved him, “my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.”

And again in the garden, when the awful crisis neared, he selected from his disciples the three most dear to him, he consoled him with their company as far as they might go with him, and then retiring only a little farther, he fell down on his face and uttered those few and pungent words, which must be deeply impressed on the memories of all of you. But his feelings were too much agonized—even Messiah could not pray, and he hastened back again to his sympathising friends.

These feelings, strong and tender, which shed the mildest and most engaging radiance over Messiah's character, will operate a like result on all Messiah's people. It is not in nature that persons should be christians, and yet be without a heart. And, ordinarily at heart, the strength and tenderness of uncorrupted feeling will be manifested in friendships that know no guile, and in yet tenderer attachments that scarcely know a boundary.

Enoch thus surrounded with a little family of love, a family that augmented gradually to many sons and daughters, did not find his heart so completely engrossed, as to leave no room for his Creator; nor were his thoughts so much engaged about making provision for his family, as to deprive him of time or disposition to cultivate a strick and steady intercourse with heaven. "Enoch," says our historian—"Enoch walked with God." My dear friends, I hope there are none of you who need any explanation of this highly expressive, but very plain phrase. You know something of your Creator's character and providence. You know that he is the Almighty, the Omniscient, the Omnipresent God. You have often heard of that care of his which extends to little sparrows as they light upon the twigs, and even numbers the hairs of your head.

You have read many of his promises founded on such a providence, and authorizing and commanding you to commit all your concerns to God, and to cast your cares on him. You know full well of that provision of his bounty, the gift of his own son to obey and suffer in the room of men, that God might exercise mercy consistently with justice, and accomplish all his promises without infringing against the sanctions of his righteous law.—You know all this, and you know what kind of feelings it becomes the sons of earth to cherish, and what kind of conduct it is fit that they pursue, when walking in the light of all this revelation, and cherishing the large and solid hope which this revelation sanctions. You would have a creature so circumstanced to regard most sacredly his benefactors will, and to cherish with enthusiasm the friendship which he tenders. You would have him spurn with indignation every seductive proffer which was burdened with the alternative of dishonour done to God, or of the prostration of that integrity which is precious in God's sight. You would have him in one word, most yielding and accommodating in every thing that ministers to the charities of life; but in questions of duty and deep interest, wakeful as an Argus, firm as the ocean-rock. Such was the character, such were the tempers of the Patriarch Enoch. He walked with God, and he did so upon the terms with which every good man closes; he did so in the faith of Messiah who was to come. So the the apostle Paul has testified, when summing up the worthies who had departed in the faith of Christ. "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death: and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God." Heb. xi. 5.

The pre-eminent piety of Enoch speaks much more strongly in his favor, when we consider the age in which he lived. Men had began to multiply considerably on earth, and favored as they were with but a partial revelation, destitute also of those public ordinances of religion which not only contribute to enlighten men in the knowledge of the truth, but to kindle and extend a spirit of warm piety, from the very fact of their associating in multitudes together; it is not at all surprising, that they should have soon lost in a great degree their interest in things eternal, and have felt and acted as persons who were to continue here forever. It is very true that Adam, and most of the early patriarchs remained a long while upon earth. Adam lived no less than 930 years; and by summing up the various periods given you in this chapter from Adam down to Noah, you will discover that Enoch himself was cotemporary with Adam for more than 300 years. The transactions of the creation and of the fall of man, must therefore have appeared of very recent occurrence. While Adam, and Seth, and Canaan, were yet alive, and multitudes of the men who had seen the earth put on its earliest garb at every change of season, the various facts most interesting to our race would of course be well authenticated. But then mankind would be led, and they actually were led, from their familiarity with all these things, to attach to them very small importance; and it was only here and there, where the ears of piety drank in the lessons of wisdom and knowledge from the lips of Adam or of other patriarchs; it was only here and there, that any one would profit by the opportunities thus placed so fairly within his reach. Meanwhile this very fact, the protracted duration of human life, afforded strong

facilities to alienate the mind from God. Who that looked forward to a probable duration of 700 or 1000 years, would stand so much in awe of judgment and eternity, as the men of modern days who sum up their course in three score years and ten! What prodigious advantages might avarice anticipate, when it could through such a period increase and enjoy its stores! What strong inducements to rapine and violence when the possessions won with danger might be held for such a term! What fine facilities to calm the stubborn conscience of the reveller and sensualist, when he could look forward through centuries in which to prolong his riot, and still farther to other centuries through which he might repent and learn to amend his ways! All these results are strickly natural, and we find that they were common. Sensuality, and rapine, and violence, and blood, so increased upon the earth during 1600 years, that infinite holiness could no longer brook it. God broke the pillars which sustained the crust of earth, and her face was merged in waters.

Against the force of these temptations our patriarch stood firm. From the lips of earlier men he gathered motives to piety and purity, and while he saw the heads of patriarchs growing hoary for the grave, he curbed the strong propensities of warm blooded youth, and in the blossom of his manhood prepared to meet his God.

It mattered not to Enoch that eight hundred years of life stretched far before his fancy in broad and ample view. He provided for his family, but to the lures of avarice he was resolutely blind; by faith he anticipated an inheritance in heaven, and so he "walked with God." In vain did ambition point out the many honours that eight hundred future years might make to blossom on his head; by

faith he saw an object of more legitimate ambition, when the seed of the woman should bruise the serpents head; an acquisition which he might inherit without the fear of violence, without the sting of guilt, through innumerable such years as eternity shall unfold; and still he "walked with God." In vain did pleasure, seductive and secure, present ten thousand extacies to disarm his self-denial:—by faith he saw a paradise where was munificence such as God pours out, full floods of pleasures where there is friendship without selfishness, and love without alloy:—Enoch remembered it, and "Enoch walked with God." In vain did the world heap its calumnies upon him, in vain did it point at the singularities of his piety, at the stubbornness of his integrity; in vain did it assail him with ridicule or railing. No man can be indifferent to opinions of his fellows; even Jesus of Nazareth acutely felt the pressure when men most unworthy spoke of him with scorn; but Enoch, though the blush sometimes mantled on his cheek, remembered well the period when judgment unto righteousness shall dissipate men's calumnies; when the Lord himself shall come with ten thousands of his saints, and when piety and purity shall see, that of God's creation, they have the million on their side; the great mass of intelligences, dignified, and tender, and lovely, in his innocence:—Enoch thought of this and he walked closely with God. Thus in his youth did he make the choice of wisdom; and in defiance of all temptation that sprung up within his bosom, and regardless of the discouragements that were frowning all around him, he adhered to the course at first so wisely chosen: he steered right onward.

It was the bearings of his choice on his eternal destiny; it was the sober certainty of the future judgment that reg-

ulated the feelings and governed the course of Enoch. It was this that armed him with sufficient courage not only to maintain his course in despite of human calumnies, but to hurl back upon the world their denunciations of evil, and to do it not only as a good man, but as a commissioned prophet. On this circumstance the Mosaic history is silent; but the apostle Jude has detailed it in language of great force. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these things, saying, behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints."—Jude i. 14.

The duty thus assigned to this faithful patriarch, was of all others the most painful. There is no difficulty my dear friends, and nothing is endangered, when we unfold to you God's purposes of immeasurable mercy, and breathe the salutations of Messiah's peace. You are pleased to follow, and all men love to follow us through those excursive flights which rise to depict the character of Deity in all its lustre and stupendous greatness; or stretch far to compass his plans of general good, so magnificent and wise. You love to hear of these things, and of all that serves to minister to hope, to feeling or to fancy.

But then there are messages which fell within the circle of the prophets duties, and which now make up the burden of our New Testament commission, which it is not quite so pleasant either to hear or to deliver. God commands us to unfold to you the whole of his deep councils; to tell you of that holiness without which none shall see his face, to deliver his instructions unadulterated and unfrittered. And he has taught us to expect that in a world of sin, when so many wills are careless of the will of God, and so many hearts at variance with his holiness and righteousness, there must be much that will not flatter, and much

that will deeply wound the self-love and prejudices of men. He himself experienced it; he has taught us to expect it. "The servant he has told us is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me they will also persecute you. If they have kept my sayings they will keep your sayings." It must be so, in the nature of things till the world retains no principles and countenances no practices hostile to the perfect will of God. There is then but one alternative to the minister of Jesus Christ. He must be unfaithful to his trust, and so escape the wrath of all men; or he must make up his mind to stand approved to God, and dare the worst from them who hate his message. So Enoch stood.

"Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified
"His love he kept, his loyalty his zeal."

But no man will be the loser who suffers for his maker. The being who has displayed such magnificence in his creation, who has evinced such nice conceptions of the becoming and the grand, will not be found the foremost to desert his friends. He is able and he will be prompt to repair their wrongs.

He did so speedily and he did it nobly in the case before us. Enoch went on resolved and unreprouable, unseduced by temptation, never shrinking from his task, and anticipating a long life of cheerless opposition and of thankless toil. But he was never destined to see such life of toil. Never should that fine countenance be furrowed deep with age; never should labour and sorrow prematurely blench his head. At a moment most unlooked for, while he still fulfilled his duties, at a moment most rapturous there came a messenger from heaven, he came with all his retinue, horsemen and chariots of fire. Who saw his triumph, or who saw it not the scripture no where tells us. The apos-

the Paul has however intimated that the circumstance was not of a very public nature, or at least that as happened afterwards in the case of Elijah there were some who did not credit it, for search was made after him; but Enoch was not found—He was not found for God had taken him. His cup of sorrow was exhausted in self-denials and reproaches. No lingering sickness should unsettle those firm nerves; no clod of the valley should press that honored head. He had bared his forehead to reproach in the cause of God his Maker, and the first of mortal flesh that forehead should be wreathed with ever-during amaranth in the paradise of God. So the faithful were taught how God rewarded fidelity; so the nations learned the value of that hope which sheds the light of life immortal through the mansions of the grave, and demonstrates the possibility of flesh however gross, of bones however frail being fitted for a station in the world of spirits where God the spirit reigns.

Of the nature of this change we can know very little. But when Elijah stood with Moses and his master on the mount of transfiguration, and “spake with him of his disease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem;” his raiment was all white and glistening, and he wore the radiance of a cherubs face. Such faces, we trust will many of you wear, when Messiah shall come with ten thousands of his saints to execute his judgments; such transfiguration shall be common, when the last generation of the called and faithful shall hear that same trumpet that awakes the slumbering dead, and exchange their wrinkles, or their weeds for the white and glistening raiment that flowed down to the feet of Enoch; raiment that shall flow round many forms as fair.

Let us not ask any questions, how God can change the laws and qualities of body, and fit it for inhabiting a world where all is spirit. Enoch proves to us that the change is really practicable. Elijah and Messiah under two other dispensations afford us like examples; and we question not his power when truth is so inviolate.

Let us take our stand like Enoch on the faith of God's Messiah; let us make our choice like Enoch of a friend who will not fail us; and though we prophecy like Enoch, and all men discard our message; though we take our stand like him and men villify our characters; yet light is our task in this christianized age, and short is our trial of three score years and ten. The God of Enoch has promised us the resurrection and the life; he will send forth all his horsemen and his chariots of fire; he will himself come down, and he will save his people.

And then when they approach, as they surely shall approach the crystal wall of heaven; when her self-moving gates expand "on golden hinges turning;" when they look back from that height to view once more earth, far distant dimly twinkling as a star of the smallest magnitude; then shall they feel as righteous Enoch felt, when that voice from heaven met him, "come in thou blessed of the Lord, come in;" and they shall judge what self-denial, or suffering, or deaths, can be weighed against that welcome "servant of God well done!" Patriarchs and prophets, martyrs and apostles; thou translated Enoch; thou martyred Paul; may my lot be as your lot; may all these sheep have place in that grand cavalcade; when many translated bodies and bodies changed from death, shall crowd through heaven's great arch-way, till the courts of God be full.

SERMON IX.

BIOGRAPHY OF NOAH.

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them.” Gen. vi. 1.

Few events fall out under the government of God, that more naturally and intensely wrap the mind in wonder or cause the heart to thrill with pain, than the prodigious waste of loveliness and life which we are compelled to witness almost day by day. The loveliest flowers waste their fragrance in the wilderness, or expand their beauties on the mountain top, where no eye ever sees them smiling in their loveliness, then drooping, fading, dying, on their stock. Man or beast cannot set their foot upon the grass without whelming in desolation many a little world of small but active beings that people by myriads every leaf and blade. Every shower that fructifies the earth, every frost that nips autumnal vegetation, deals destruction complete as it is wide upon the crowded population of these innumerable little worlds.

These things are suffered to pass almost unnoticed and unfelt by us, because we occupy a place so high in the scale of universal being, that all we have been noticing dwindles into insignificance when compared with those greater and more obtrusive changes which may in any way

affect ourselves. But ascend high as you please in the scale of this creation; still you will find that universal providence lavish of its gifts and prodigal of life. How often do you meet with men whose intellectual faculties are of prodigious mould; yet shrouded under the rubbish of irremediable ignorance; or buried in stations remote and obscure; when like the flowers of the desert they shed their fragrance round on beings quite unable to distinguish their loveliness or appreciate their worth? How often do we trace the path of desolation through all the regions of organic life, among beings who can feel, and suffer, and enjoy?—It is thus Almighty providence displays its own exuberance, creating or destroying in a moment, at a word, loveliness and life more varied and abundant than numbers can express, or human conception grasp. He occupies a station infinitely removed above the highest grades of created being. To his immensity all rises; all distances are equal; are as nothing; a single unit and numbers incomprehensible are managable alike in his plans and calculations; omnipotence knows no difference between lighting up a glow-worm and kindling a sun in heaven. And with the very same facility he peoples or depopulates a single leaf of clover, and a province of creation vast as Saturn. That hailstone that bruised and destroyed a little world which before was flourishing in all its summers pride, is an event that finds its counterpart in the loftier scale of things, when omnipotence bursts a world of prodigious diameter; then comes the fragments to urge their course through heaven, at different distances and in different orbits, each are in magnitude a large and perfect world.

Of the causes of these changes, as we sometimes wit-

ness them, or of the reasons which induce an all-wise providence thus lavishly to create and lavishly to destroy, it is not possible that we should, in the present state, be able to know much. One thing however we do know, that power in the hand of God is lodged where all should wish it, it obeys the dictate of unerring wisdom and undoubted goodness; and however distressing and tremendous the ruin he often brings, he never suffers it; but where it ought to be.

Of this our world is a standing witness. We record to-day a ruin more extensive and tremendous than has ever been repeated, or than will ever be again; till the general conflagration shall melt the very elements and convert the earth to cinder. But while we sustain the credibility of the bible story by an appeal to facts of every order, done on every scale, we repeat the suggestion that omnipotence never trifles with any of its productions; goodness and wisdom, stability and righteousness, stamp all the ways of providence; and without abundant reason this curse shall never come.

To the reality of the deluge, we have abundant and highly varied testimony in the actual state of the world and in the traditions of all nations. And to some of these proofs we propose inviting your attention, after we shall have traced fully the scriptural account in this and succeeding lectures. Our business to-day is with the fearful preparations for this grand event; and with these circumstances in the conduct and general character of the world which made way for a catastrophe so signal.

Fifteen hundred and thirty six years had already consecrated to human gratitude the goodness and patience of Almighty God, since the day that our first father brought

death into the world. During all this period Providence had blessed the multiplying and extending families of the earth with salubrious air and fruitful seasons; so that a period of nearly 1000 years rolled round, before bodies destined at first for an immortality of being, sunk down beneath the complicated influence of laborious exertion and ill-regulated passion. Calculations founded on the ordinary laws of population, have demonstrated that even so early as the 1200th year of the world mankind must have been much more numerous on the earth than they have ever been since the times of the deluge. But they did not make progress merely in numbers. Wickedness too increased; and it would appear to have been in a ratio fully commensurate with the increase of population.

We noticed on a former occasion one great cause that must have contributed powerfully to the production of such a result. The prodigious space on which men were privileged to found their calculations for futurity, would not only have a tendency to weaken their apprehensions of a future judgment, but would add almost inconceivable force to all those motives which shape the courses of mere earthly minds. To every exertion, to every act of fraud and violence, the impulse would be strong in proportion to the period through which it might be possible to enjoy the recompense of toil or danger. And when we combine the effects of these considerations, when we reflect how a being would be disposed to act, over whose feelings the ideas of future judgment would bear such feeble sway, and whose soul would be fired by the prospect of advantage for such a protracted season; we can scarcely think it strange that no authority human or divine, could compete with his warm wishes. Add to these, the progressive na-

ture of the human mind, indeed of all that God has made. Habits, passions, appetites, every thing bad as well as good increases by degrees. You know the softness and pliancy of childhood. You know the comparative uprightness and purity of hearts, yet unpractised in the ways of sin. You know that the veriest monster who ever cursed the world or dishonored our common nature; once saw the time when he would have turned pale at sights which afterwards wrought in him extacy, such as infernals feel, and would have shrunk with horror from suggestions which in process of time, he could revolve deliberately and put in practice with promptitude and even pleasure. God's law is written on every human heart. It is a law of kindness, of purity and uprightness. No man becomes unjust, unfeeling or unprincipled, but by successive and generally very gradual steps. But all the records of the earth will tell you what ten, or twenty, or thirty years will do. Let but the course of sin and shame commence; let act make way for act, and effort brace for effort; and in a very little while that modest, that retiring countenance, that betrayed the slightest variant feeling of the heart, that countenance on which were pictured, the simplicity, the ingenuousness, the purity of childhood, that countenance will present a person of far other port; it will become the index of a mind resolute, unfeeling, unprincipled, unabashed;—the port, say, of arch-angel, but of arch-angel fallen. No science can develope the history of a mind thus forming through a period of 1000 years. No arithmetic can calculate the force of habits, and passions, growing unresisted through so long a term. No heart can divine the depth of the abasement in which vice and meanness would sink a spirit impure. One thousand years of

progressive wickedness, fortified by the example, and stimulated by the inventions of thousand's old in crime, must make a monster of no common mould. Now, then, need any be surprised that all the world were monsters. And when we read that "the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually"—when we read that "the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence;" we need no comment on the fact just now repeated, in order to put us in possession of the cause. Nor do we need an able apologist for that strong expression, "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to the heart." An expression which in attributing to him human feelings and passions, varies in nothing from those so usual in the scriptures which ascribe to him eyes, and ears, and hands; but which serves without any danger of mistake, to convey in language predicated on human sense and feeling; ideas which have nothing in common but the results to which they point. God changed his dispensations toward the sons of men, and appeared in other character than they had ever witnessed. And it was high time to do so:—"the wickedness of man was great upon the earth."

But where meanwhile were all those faithful patriarchs? Where were the favored seed of them who had born aloft the standard of Messiah? Translated Enoch, had many sons and daughters. And many were the patriarchs who in later times had assembled their young offspring around God's blazing altars, and taught them to fall prostrate like Abram in after times, before the vision as it passed. Had the lineage of all those disappeared from among men? Or had the descendents of parents so faithful and so honored

pursued a different course. Their lineage had not perished. The progeny of the patriarchs was renowned upon the earth; but it was in the annals of dissoluteness and blood. The cause of this defection is marked in this short history with a prominence that well deserves your notice. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." The expression "sons of God" is well known to the scriptural reader. It is a usual and highly proper appellation for professors of the true religion, the members of the church of God. These it would seem, regardless of their better and enduring interests, or unsuspecting of the consequences, or inattentive to them, entered into the most intimate alliance with families careless, and hardened, and vicious, to the excess which marked the general character of men before the flood. The consequence was natural. The human heart at best, is sufficiently prone of itself to recede from God and from all the offices of piety; the feet of the most cautious stand on slippery places; and when persons thus circumstanced unite their destinies with those whose whole hearts and habits are moulded into forms most adverse to piety, it requires no prophetic spirit to foretel the natural consequence. If your heart already have strong propensities to evil, and the heart and habits of your bosom friend be wholly thus inclined; it is likely, much more likely, that the victory will be his, than that your feeble purposes will bring him over to virtue. If his arms twine round you, while you stand on slippery places, it is much more likely that he will drag you down with him, than that your feeble powers should serve to keep you upright, and raise your fellow from his prostrate state. It is the law of being, a universal law, that our tastes, and

feelings, and principles, and conduct, derive much of their character from those with whom we associate. This principle will operate with ten-fold vigour when affection seconds the strong influence of society; and when the dispositions of our associate are backed by strong propensities originally within our bosoms, it will be wonderful indeed if the tastes and character of those with whom we stand united, do not become our own. The law thus operated in the days beyond the flood. It operated on the sons and daughters of the patriarchs; with unerring certainty and with prodigious power. The arm of the Most High interposed. He not only taught succeeding generations to beware, by illustrating the consequences in many a fearful instance, but by monstrous productions, giants and fearful births, he taught the nations that they were marriages most unblest. It is useless to inquire who were the progenitors of those fair but dangerous females whose blandishments brought ruin on so many sons of promise. Many have supposed them the descendants of Cain, in whose family originated many of the fine arts. The daughter, for instance of Jubal, the father of all such as handle the harp and organ: and they suppose that the allurements of music and of dress were brought in aid of their native charms. But the cause would appear too remote and partial for so general an effect. Nor is there any need for such a supposition. In a world where almost every thing was leagued with impiety and dissoluteness; there would be many a form as faultless as any of Cain's daughters, many a shrine of hearts as destitute of piety.

Let us rather bring home the lesson to these latter days. Your own social principles and moral sense obey the very law that wrought such ruin to the children of the patri-

archs. Your choice and habits, not only shape your own destiny, they have a bearing as decided as in the days of Noah on those with whom you stand united. Let your lecturer then beseech you, not only as you value your own immortal hope, but as you value the best interests of those dearest to your hearts, never aid them in the formation of principles or habits unfriendly to the hope of life. Let not your negligence estrange them from the house of God; let not your follies tempt them to deny the Saviour. The apostle Paul has told us of women whose record is now displayed in heaven, that have ministered by an amiable and pious conduct to the salvation of their husbands. He has made the appeal to others, and he has reversed the order: "how knowest thou woman, but thou mayest save thy husband? how knowest thou man, but thou mayest save thy wife?" Yes there is more, much more than you imagine depends on the tastes and tempers that you cultivate. We catch the spirit as we catch the manners of those whom we love and with whom we associate most. And woe to that person who chills or blights the nascent spirit of piety, by so abusing the sympathies of nature as to lead the partner of his choice away from God, away from his sanctuary, away from piety, away from hope. But happy for time, and happy for eternity, the union of those hands, which are linked in climbing Zion's heights, and in offering the same sacrifice before Jehovah.

SERMON X.

BIOGRAPHY OF NOAH. (CONTINUED.)

“And the Lord said unto Noah, come thou, and all thy house, into the ark: for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.”

Gen. vii. 1.

THE common sense and feeling of mankind have dictated that new and important epochs; in the history of the world, should be regarded with a solemnity commensurate with the changes those epochs introduce. Even in the concerns of individual destiny, insensibility to the changes which affect our prospects, is rightly deemed a proof of depravity of heart as well as littleness of mind; while it is stated as the duty and conceded to be the glory of christi-anized man, to “weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that do rejoice.” Hence that proneness to make every thing around us speak the strong feelings which new epochs introduce. On days of general joy, all that we can wield is put under requisition, dumb nature aids us in a thousand ways to tell the strong emotions that thrill every bosom; and we heighten and augment the so-lemnities of grief by signalizing our movements with all the pomp of woe. Who does not do homage to public sensibility when he sees the malefactor die in awful state? and who does not feel that these appendages of justice deepen and extend the impression of the scene?

A wise and mighty Providence can never be the last to notice or improve the principles implanted in the bosom of its creatures. Already has it sanctioned in a thousand instances, and in as many forms, this proneness to solemnize the grand æras of our history, by giving to every movement the most imposing aspect. By an appeal to our senses, he often commands a fixed attention to the visitations of his mercy; by an appeal to the senses, he implants a strong remembrance of all that was most harrowing in his desolating judgments. Had Enoch and Elijah been wrapt suddenly from view, faint and unfrequent would have been our recollection of the change, compared with what we gather from the pomp of all his messengers, and his chariots of fire; and small would have been our warning from Abiram and his company, had not the opening earth impressed the senses with a lesson which we should have gathered more imperfectly from an ordinary judgment. And even all that we read, and all that we anticipate of the awful solemnities of the judgment day will be arranged upon this principle. The voice of that trumpet sounding long and loud; the grandeur of the array that shall burst upon the view when Messiah plants his great white throne aloft, and ranges on either side the interminable ranks of heaven's high principalities, the fierce and bickering flame that plays underneath and shoots far before the throne, the volumes opened and the judgment set—all, all that is most terrible to human sense and thought, is ordained that this creation may be impressed the more deeply by the solemnities of that dread hour, and that sense may consecrate to everlasting remembrance an event at once so important and so grand.

It was in perfect harmony with these great principles of

action, and in tender consideration of creation's wants, that his preparations for the judgment that was to consign a world to ruin were made on such a scale and continued through such a period. One hundred and twenty years were allotted to our race that they might be at length induced to consider and amend their ways, and defile the earth with blood and violence no more. During that long period (one hundred and twenty years,) the patriarch Noah raised the notes of warning, and bade the nations prepare to meet their God. On Shinar's plain he laid the first huge beams of that stupendous vessel that was destined to preserve a sample of all creation from the general wreck. And still as the work progressed he reiterated his solemn warnings to the hardened and determined spirits of the age, to spirits, says the apostle Peter, to spirits now in prison. Yet one hundred and twenty years, he cried—yet sixty years—yet thirty years, and then ye men of violence shall defile the earth no more.

But the age was past amendment; the world past hope. A few there were, when he first began to prophecy, a few who like Noah walked with God and believed that what he threatened he would be faithful to fulfill. Noah had both a father and a grandfather alive upon the earth. Lamech, that father, and Methusaleh his progenitor, are among the very few whose praise is in the scriptures and whose record is on high. But these aged men, both of whom had been contemporaries of Adam the father of our race, Lamech for a period of 57 years, and Methusaleh during as many as 243; these men who thus formed a kind of links that united the first and the last of the ante-diluvian race, contemporaries alike with the first that were created and with the last that lived, they were not destined

to witness a calamity so distressing to all who felt an interest in the welfare of our race. Five years before the general deluge the eyes of Lamech closed in peace; and Methuselah only lived till his venerable locks, now white with the winters of almost a thousand years, were no longer needed to reprove and shame the vices of the age. But a very few months before the deluge happened, the feeble old man was dismissed from all his pains, and the last of all the ante-diluvian fathers laid him down in peace.

And now the stage was clear, why should judgment sleep? why should perdition linger? Perdition did not linger—judgment did not sleep. The ark was completed, she was provisioned for her voyage; and the nations warned for one hundred and twenty years, but not amended—thousands warned by the sight of that prodigious vessel, but neither terrified nor convinced, nothing now remained but to execute the judgment. A voice from heaven was addressed to Noah: “Come thou and all thy house into the ark.” Directions were also given relative to all the fowls of heaven, and beasts and reptiles of the earth, that a few might be preserved, a pair of the unclean, and seven of every beast and fowl called clean, partly to serve the purposes of sacrifice, partly to re-stock the earth. All this was done. The beasts and fowls and reptiles, heaven-directed, sought the place of refuge. Seven days was the patriarch occupied in arranging this strange cargo. Last of all he and his family entered in. This last, this little week was the closing period of the world’s long respite. One would have thought that surely among the multitude who witnessed this last transaction; who had often heard the prophet’s warnings, and for a long time witnessed his upright life, there would have been a portion found who

were not quite immoveable, and who by this last measure would have been stirred up to consider their latter end. But we read of no such persons. An ark'so long preparing would naturally excite the scorn of those who, disbelieving the prediction, set no value on the work. And they who had for a century made a jest of our patriarch's labours, would feel less and less disposed to stand in awe of the judgment the longer it was delayed. For above one hundred years they had heard of this calamity, and yet the calamity came not. Still the sun in heaven shone brightly, and all was gaiety on earth. Why then should they be moved by this last act of Noah? It was perfectly in unison with all he had been saying, all he had been doing for so long a time: and heretofore they had derided him, and done it with impunity. Why not do it still? Brightly on that morning rose the sun above the eastern plains. In the fullness of his strength he shot his accustomed beams, as he rode a cloudless sky, and climbed the hill of heaven. All was calm, all promised the stability of former days and years, as Noah with his family entered in. Nobody was warned, nobody was alarmed, no one even regarded this last solemn presage. The Saviour has informed us that all things went on as usual. They planted, they builded, they married, they were given in marriage—they all pursued in security their avocations and amusements, or followed up their trade of violence and blood. But who will trust appearances even on the face of heaven? Who has not witnessed how on many a summer's day the gay face of nature is swathed in sudden darkness; the busy songsters of the forest sit silenced and terrified, or seek some place of shelter; the lucid lightnings glance where late played the beam of heaven; and the rushing of

the tempest and the roaring of the thunder hurl confusion and dismay and desolation on the scene late tranquil and smiling in all its summer's pride.

Such change we often witness even in these ordinary times, when no judgments that had been denounced are to be executed on the earth, but the sole intent is to revive the face of nature and fructify the ground. But here was a tempest intended to destroy and not to bless the nations, designed to spread havoc through universal nature, and to shorten the ordinary duration of human life by deranging the structure and altering the constitution of the material world. We can judge what violence was needed to promote these ends; we can imagine how tremendous must have been the face of things, what blackness shrouded heaven, what thunders shook the earth, when the Creator rose in the awfulness of his power to vindicate his judgments on a world of culprits. Your most dreadful tornadoes are but the sighing of the breeze, your deluges of rain but as the gentle dew, compared with that dread scene in which the windows of heaven are said to have been opened, and the fountains of the deep broken up. God of grandeur, we have known something of thy works; past ages have recorded the horrors of the scene when Omnipotence has arisen to signalize itself. But how shall we tell this people what the scriptures mean when they speak of cataracts precipitated from the heights of heaven, and met midway by other cataracts spouted from the yawning caverns of the earth. Dreadful was the sight when the heaven's first changed their livery, and clouds raked by whirlwinds flew in quick succession as if winged with the lightnings ever darting from their sides. But the horrors of that darkness, the crashing of that thunder, the spout-

ing, spattering, dashing of heaven's cataracts, were as things of nought when the earth began to reel. The crust of earth was broken, the fountains of the great deep were let loose; yonder spouted a cataract a thousand fathoms wide, ten thousand fathoms high; there sunk a plain in the bottomless abyss, with all its fields and villages and populous cities crowned. The mountains began to heave, lightnings from above made all their tops to tremble, lightnings from beneath cleft in twain their wide-spread bases, and massive slabs of marble, and large masses of granite, each one for size a mountain, were loosened from their seats, and tossed like hail stones in the air. The Alps and the Andes at this good hour bear witness to the horrors of the scene. Rocks rightly called the bones of those huge mountains, great mammoth rocks, like mountains in circumference, rocks so prodigious that no volcano could have heaved them, no earthquake could unseat them, may now be found by thousands, thrown up in wild disorder, and whole miles from the spots that evidently gave them birth. These facts are well known to all geologists; and in vain they would account for them by supposing such earthquake as no nation has recorded, or imagining volcanoes to which Vesuvius is a squib. Vain and useless are all such suppositions. The book of God records a deluge so desolating and horrible as to have found its way into the traditions of almost every nation under heaven—a deluge that was intended to destroy the frame of nature; and while continents were sinking, while cataracts were bursting, while earth was teeming forth whole oceans by the hour; it is easy to suppose that amid the nodding of the mountains and the rushing of the waters, these masses were borne so far from their native bed. Much more ea;

sy than to suppose there have been earthquakes and volcanoes, in the great belt of Asia, among the mountains of Europe, in lofty Atlas, or the still more lofty Andes—earthquakes and volcanoes which no tradition mentions, which no example equals, with which none can once compare.

We need not tell you that desolations so tremendous must very soon have approved themselves to the astounded world as indeed the very judgment which Noah had been denouncing for 120 years. It is easy to suppose that people in the immediate vicinity of the ark, people who had heard the last warning of the patriarch, and marked him when he ascended on the morning of that day to take up his long abode—it is easy to suppose that such people would be terrified when the heavens first assumed their unusual darkness and put on their garniture of death. But no tongue can describe, no imagination can conceive the traits of horror that were presented in a world so populous when the dire work of destruction was commenced. It did not commence, merely commence with loud and dashing rains, that deluged the fields, and swelled the brooks, and then raised the rivers high above their banks. There was no room left for that climax of many horrors, which would naturally arise from the gradual augmentation of the waters, first over the plains, then mounting up the hills, then leaving only the mountain tops uncovered, then earth bursting and the mountains tumbling in. The work was far more fearful at the very outset. It was on the very day that Noah entered the ark—"that same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." No space was given for the gradual accumulation of horror upon horror; no

opportunity afforded for suppliant thousands to surround the ark, and with outstretched hands entreat to be admitted. Deluges of rain, cataracts from heaven, beat down the adventurous who were found from under shelter, washed off at once the mud walled cottages, and unroofed the buildings of a firmer mould. Earth tossed and bellowed; lightning and earthquake did their speedy work; and rare must have been the scenes of protracted agony, and small the multitude that amid the tossings of the mountains, and the tumblings of the cataracts could have essayed to scale their heights. Few would be the screams of children clinging to their mothers, and short the silent anguish of females folded to the heart of those they trusted most. Directly—yes, directly the desolation was complete. And no noise disturbed the air save the howling of the tempest, and now and then a mountain nodding to its fall. But the design of heaven did not terminate with the destruction of all flesh. Earth must be cleansed from their polluted carcasses, and her face must retain not so much as one memorial of the abuse and degradation to which her riches had been subject. Thence in part the change upon the face of nature, that every memorial, every vestige of human crime might be done away; and that the sun of heaven when once and again he should look from behind those clouds might witness no remains of scenes profaned by vice, the memorials of dishonour done to God who formed them.

For forty days and nights the tempest was continued, till the waters prevailed to the height of fifteen cubits above the tallest mountains, and not even one twig of the stunted shrubbery that clothes the mountain top was to be seen above its surface. It was a world of waters, an ocean

without shore; and save that ark now floating on its surface, a small and moving speck, nothing was discernible over all the watery waste from one end of heaven even to the other. Seven months it continued at its utmost height; for seven long months this mighty ball presented the silence as well as stillness of universal death. No dashing of the waters, for they found no shore against which to aim their shock; no rippling of the surge, for the winds of heaven were chained. It was universal silence over the universal waste; a still but awful lecture on the justice of high heaven, on the sure and certain retribution of impenitence.

That ark alone remained above the waters. Like a little casket containing things most precious, the eye of him who inherits all the nations was bent stedfastly upon it. For there floated the germ of all the various nations since famous in the annals of the world. There, pent up within that little circuit, were the pledges of all that animate the landscape, or make the forest vocal, or glance their variant plumage before the mid-day sun. But we note not now the dangers they encountered, the tumults that swelled the bosoms of the rational part of this great cargo of life, or the faithful superintendance of that Almighty Providence that landed them in safety in a world restored.

On next Lord's day we celebrate a deliverance of which the ark with all its blessings was but a feeble type. And it is fit that you should then accompany this favoured family through a voyage so eventful, to a termination so auspicious, that you may regard with more intentness a more complete deliverance from a greater ill. Till then we leave this faithful patriarch sailing on the bosom of the deep.

We will not detain you now with the many busy inquiries that have been urged upon this theme. We satisfy no man's question, "how did God provide sufficient water to deluge all the world?" We point to that same hand that first dug the channels of the deep, and that threw around our globe its attenuated air. We point to the fact that he dissolved the frame of nature, as almost all the vallies and all the mountain-tops will witness at this hour. It is enough that the bible assigns a cause most adequate. Omnipotence interfered, Omnipotence did the thing. And we pretend not to fathom the resources of Omnipotence when it brings a flood of waters, or when it makes a world. All nations, all nature bears witness that it was done. How Omnipotence did it, Omniscience must unfold. But it is well that he did it by a flood of waters. The horrors of that scene strike horror to human sense; and the traces as well as traditions of the dreadful visitations prolong to mankind the advantage of the lesson by giving them unquestionable assurance of the fact. To trace out this assurance would be to display the early records of all nations, or with modern geologists to scale the lofty mountains and to dive deep into the plains. It would be a work of hours, of days, of weeks. In multitudes of volumes these evidences are enfolded, there you must consult them.

We assume the fact as unquestionably authentic: we point it out as a declared visitation of a world's transgressions: we note it as the accomplishment of predictions warmly urged for 120 years upon the improvident and unbelieving. And finally, we now repeat to you another prediction of much longer standing and of much more fearful import, which the same mouth has uttered, which the same arm shall execute—"Knowing this first, that there shall

come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they* were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up."—2 Peter iii. 3—7. 10. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."—1 Thess. iv. 16. 17. "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the *second death*. And whosoever was not found written in

the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”—Rev. xx. 11—15. Finally, hear the assurances of the Saviour himself: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or a thirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, verily, I say un-

to you, inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."—Matthew xxv. 31—46.

"Consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." We point you to the deluge, as the pledge of heaven's fixed purpose in the judgment here denounced. Before the bar of judgment a bickering flame shall dart, it shall swathe the earth in one interminable sheet of flame. But we have an ark in which to plough this deluge, an ark now safely moored before the mercy seat of God, where the cherubim of glory spread over it their wings. We have it in commandment to declare to all the nations that there is none other name given under heaven by which you can be saved. We have it in commandment to bid the nations enter in. On next Lord's day we minister to you the seals of this assurance. We will say that so certainly as we break to you that bread, the Saviour was broken for all who will receive him. We say to you that so really as you receive and drink that cup, he will minister salvation to all who now confess him. Who is there among you that sighs for God's salvation? Who desires to seek it in God's appointed way? Let them take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Yet 1300 years and I, even I do bring a tempest on the earth, "hailstones and coals of fire."—"Oh that ye were wise! that ye understood this! that ye would consider your latter end."

SERMON XI.

BIOGRAPHY OF NOAH.—(CONCLUDED.)

“And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged: the fountains also of the deep, and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; and the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.”

Gen. viii. 1—3.

WHEN the hero of the noblest of the Roman poets was cast with his associates on the nothern coast of Africa, despoiled of their shipping, ignorant of their situation, and mourning the destruction of so many of their friends, he is represented as consoling their drooping spirits among other things with the suggestion that in after times, when they should have retrieved their losses, and effected a settlement in the country so long sought, they would reap no small enjoyment from the remembrance and recital of their present woes. It was a stroke most true to nature. The recollection of past sorrows as well as of departed joys is “pleasant, though mournful to the soul.” And when such emotions are placed under the consecration of christian

feeling; when the recognition of all-ruling Providence illumines the dark scene; when we remember how we trusted and were not disappointed, when we call to mind the kindness that cherished the failing spirit, the tender consideration that took thought for our many wants and set our feet at last upon firm and even ground;—then the remembrance of our sorrows is indeed a blissful exercise, for it is mingled with feelings of thankfulness and gladness:—thankfulness for the unwearied cares of such a friend; gladness that he still befriends us, and is our hope for time to come. If this earth was ever the seat of one moment of felicity unmingled and unperturbed, if ever one emotion pure as those of angels thrills through the human heart, it surely is that moment when, unnoticed by the world and heedless of all its interests, we ponder the ways in which the Almighty has led us, and remembering all his goodness when there was none other we could trust, and humbled by the recollection of our impatience or misgivings, we fall down before him and bless him for his kindness, and with ingenuous tears lament that we ever doubted, ever were afraid. Such tears may flow profusely, but they sparkle as they roll, nor will they blight the roses on the softest cheek.

Never was there a being on whom such recollections had fairer room to work, than on the patriarch whose deliverance we this day celebrate. On last Lord's day we left him in that ark, still floating on the bosom of the mighty waters. That prodigious vessel, of burden exceeding forty thousand tons, floated along unwieldly and unwielded, without a sail or rudder, the current alone its mover, and Providence its guide. Of the dangers it encountered they are fittest judges who can best imagine what surges lashed it, what billows heaved it, when falling mountains raised

mountains in the deep, and spouting cataracts made all its surface boil. Nor can less be infered from that command of the Almighty that all the sides and all the top should be made impervious to the water, save only one little window to admit the light and air. Providence interposes no miracles, except where ordinary means in their ordinary application will not effect his purposes; and the means thus employed to prevent the ark from filling clearly indicate the danger to which it was exposed.

This arrangement likewise answered another important end. The patriarch had no view from this strange prison except directly upward. It was enough for him and his family to feel the tossings of the vessel, and to hear the fierce turmoil in which all without was driving. It was well that he could only *imagine* the horrors of the scene, the deluged earth, the falling mountains, the floating carcasses. The fact no doubt exceeded all mortal comprehension: the sight would have been distraction.

But at the end of forty days the face of heaven brightened; the waters rolled no longer; and floating softly along as the tide might shape their course, full leisure was left this highly favored family to contemplate the kindness which had interposed to save them—*them*—them only of all a world so populous. How the uproar they had heard and the tossings they had experienced must have heightened and sweetened their present sense of calmness and security, you will determine for yourselves. And how this dread dispensation, taken all in all, must have elevated their conceptions of unswerving righteousness that made such havoc of a world, and of condescending goodness which yet would not destroy the righteous with the wicked, we surely need not tell you. We know well how recent danger

endears present safety; and we know that no moment so elevates devotion as that which confers distinguished kindness, when, bereaved of every other stay, we have none but God to trust.

It was on the 7th of December that "the fountains of the great deep were broken up." On the 6th of May, 150 days from the commencement of the deluge, the mandate was given and the waters began to retire. The same difficulty meets us here which we have already encountered in relation to the original place of this vast collection of waters. We know too little of the structure of the earth to say any thing with certainty on a question about which the scriptures are so utterly silent. One thing however is certain. The mean density of this great globe is nearly four times greater than that of water; that is to say it is nearly four times heavier than an equal bulk of water would be. Now, though we cannot penetrate a single mile below the surface, yet, if we are to judge from the lava of volcanoes, and from such other slight informations as we occasionally pick up in relation to the bowels of the earth, there is every reason to believe that a solid mass of rock and mineral and metal would be vastly more ponderous than we know to the world to be. We are therefore constrained to suppose that its internal parts contain prodigious cavities filled only with water. This seems necessary to account for the comparative lightness of the whole mass, Nor, if we can trust the geological intimations of him who made the earth, will we hesitate upon this subject. The apostle Peter suggests that the disposition of its parts was different originally from their present arrangement; "the earth," he says, "then standing out of the water, and in the water." And the psalmist is express in his assertion that

it is founded on the floods. We are not to expect from the scriptures formal instruction on questions of geology, or astronomy, or indeed on any other subject which man pursues as science. But we surely are to expect that God best knows his own works, and must therefore believe that if he incidentally alludes to them, the allusion will be correct. When, for instance, we are told that he hung the earth upon nothing, that he balanced it in empty space, we are to look out for facts corresponding with the assertion: and modern astronomy now assures us of these facts. So also when we are told that the ground is founded upon flood, we are entitled to expect that there are vast collections of waters in the central parts of the earth. We have only then to suppose that when Omnipotence destroyed the internal organization this heavier crust would sink; and at every chasm the waters necessarily spouted. We have only to suppose another exercise of power to raise again the surface, vast interstices would be formed, and then would take place what the psalmist has described when celebrating this very event: "God laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed forever.—The waters stood above the mountains; at thy rebuke they fled: at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains, they go down by the vallies into the place which thou hast founded for them."—Psals. civ. 5-8.

They had sunk but a very little when this heavily laden vessel grounded on the top of one of the mountains of Armenia. The precise spot is of course a matter of uncertainty. The natives of the East generally point us to a large and isolated mountain, commonly called Masis, sometimes the finger mountain because of its tall and slender form. It is one of the loftiest in Asia, at least a third of its height being above the boundary of perpetual snow.

The tradition of many centuries has not only pointed the nations of the world to that mountain, but has constantly asserted that there the remnants of the ark still exist. But centuries have probably elapsed, possibly thousands, of years, since any one has scaled its heights. The celebrated traveller Tournefort attempted it; but he found the ascent so steep and dangerous that the attempt was relinquished as perfectly impracticable, after he had toiled nearly a whole day.

We will not detain you with the various expedients which our patriarch tried in order to ascertain the condition of the plains below. Though he must await the Divine command before he dare venture to depart the ark, yet it was a natural and an innocent solicitude which prompted him to discover the actual state of the retiring waters. His raven, poised on easy wing, and furnished with appropriate food which the receding deluge would naturally leave in all the hollows of the mountain top, manifested no disposition to return. But the dove which could find nothing on the bleak and rugged sides of this great mountain, whose every space presents either barren sands or sharp and rugged rocks, would naturally direct its course down to the level country. There all was water still, no food, no resting place, was found, and till the third time of her dismissal she still returned to the ark, her well known place of refuge.

It was on the seventeenth of September that the level grounds were freed from water, and the dove departed to return no more. But though drained it was not dried; and till this should be effected, till her face should no longer teem forth noxious vapours, the ark on the top of Arrarat was man's fittest dwelling. At length however, on the

27th of the second month, answering to the 18th of December, the plains were fitted to become his habitation, and he and every living thing were released from their long imprisonment. One year and eleven days had elapsed since they had trod the face of the earth before. It was a period fraught with unparalleled horrors, with unequaled revolutions; and strong and peculiar as were the emotions of that family on the day in which they entered the ark and left all the world to perish, they could scarcely be less strong and less peculiar, on the day of their revisiting the former haunts of men, where they and every vestige of their work had perished. We formerly said that the world must have been exceedingly populous before this great calamity occurred. The salubrity of the air, the fruitfulness of the soil and the great longevity of man almost infallibly secured such a result. Suppose then that there occurred no more than 20 births during the first century, and that their numbers doubled only once in fifty years after that period.—And from what we have gathered from the history of Cain and Abel, there seems good reason to suppose many more than twenty births during the first century; and the fact will shew that even under the disadvantages of contracted life and an altered state of things, population even now often doubles in far less than half a century. Yet take our modern estimate; suppose but twenty persons at the end of the first hundred years; and let that number be doubled every succeeding fifty, it will be found by a short and simple calculation that in the year of the deluge the world may have contained above twenty billion of souls; that is at least thirty times as many as all the nations number at the present day.—Make what deductions you please from this very moderate esti-

mate, and still it will appear that our patriarch must have left a crowded busy throng when he bade the world adieu. And who may not enter into Noah's feelings when at the foot of Ararrat, on a winter day, he trod once more the former seats of all this busy multitude and found the world a waste dreary at all times are scenes far removed from the cheerful haunts of men; drearily the winds hurl through the waste where decaying timbers and dilapidated walls call up to the imagination of the transient visiter what had been the scenes of busy industry or of wassail mirth before that mansion was forsaken of its inmates. But far more dreary must have been the face of things when our patriarch amidst the silence of those scenes could advert to no far distant spots still alive with busy multitudes; for there stood behind him just seven human beings, the last and little remnant of a populous world. No decaying timbers, no dilapidated walls spoke to his senses of former busy scenes; the retiring waters had drifted all away, or they lay hid from human sight far below the surface of the settled mud and slime. To Noah, as to Adam, it was an empty world; but not, as formerly, enlivened with herds of cattle grazing on the plain, and with birds innumerable perched on all the trees. It was a world yet more desolate, and that chilling sense of loneliness would be rendered far more strong by the contrast with a populousness he had so lately witnessed, but which Adam never saw. Cold as were the winds that whisked along that mountain's foot, still more chilling was the sense of so many desolations; it chilled the very heart.

But though our patriarch must have felt it as a man, as a *christian* man he bore it. And the very first use he made of life so preserved and liberty restored, was to pre-

sent the solemn services of adoration and thanksgiving to God his great preserver. Few as were the creatures saved from the deluge, and desirable as it must have been felt to preserve and cherish them, that plain and forest might again soon present the charms of animated life, no selfish considerations, no plausible dictates of a cold and calculating prudence, restrained him from expressing in the appointed way and in the most liberal style the feelings of devotion which he cherished. He and all those saved, together prepared an altar; and then instead of selecting a single victim from the small and precious remnant, they chose one of every beast and bird called clean; a sample of all that was fitted for the sacrifice; and offered at once a hecatomb to the God of their salvation. Who cannot see that little family of love surrounding that loaded altar! Who does not seem almost to hear their praises and to catch the voice of fervent supplication which mounted with the flame of that amazing sacrifice as it peered high towards the heavens! While the blazing altar disarmed the piercing winds of that December day, who does not feel that the effusions of their thankfulness and the flow of many hearts together recording the mercies of the Most High, and casting themselves and the whole world upon his care, must have dispelled the chill that at first seized on their bosoms, and converted every feeling to tenderness and love. Again they looked around, but they were no more alone; the God whom they worshiped was present to console them, and again all nature smiled. This first act of worship, so impressive and important, made a deep impression on the memory of man. Still its memorial is distinctly to be traced in the rites and traditions of the Eastern world. But, what is far more important, marked

as it was with many traits of tenderness, it met a marked reception from the mercy seat of God: "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; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done."—Gen. viii. 21. Accordingly we find in the succeeding chapter that all his words were fraught with blessings to our race. He confirmed to our patriarch dominion over the creatures; he multiplied the enjoyments and increased the facilities of human life, by authorizing what never before had been permitted to mankind, the use of animal food; and finally, after multiplying his cautions and his blessings, he gave a pledge to all the earth that such a deluge of waters should cover its face no more. And then he appointed as the token of his covenant that noble arch that lifts its awful form, but softened and beautified with all the dyes of heaven. "And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."—Gen. ix. 16. From that hour to this the bow of that covenant has been often seen in heaven; indeed almost as often as retiring clouds sweep along the face of heaven, and receding thunders mutter in the distance, God rears aloft his many-coloured bow, in signal to the nations that his covenant is remembered; and that tho' clouds may often shroud the cheerful face of day, he will be true to his purpose that they shall deluge earth no more. Four thousand years are gone and that promise is not broken; to this hour the fact has been in consonance with the symbol. Be it ours to improve by the lesson he would teach us; and

henceforward when we see this sign of security, when we measure the vast compass or admire the brilliant colours of the bow in heaven, let us remember who has guaranteed our freedom from a deluge, and trust the promises of his better covenant.

We will not trace our patriarch through the varied events of his latter days. Long he lived honoured and respected; respected as the revered father of our race; honoured as a man pre-eminent in piety, on whom Almighty Providence, in that signal preservation, did seem to set his seal to give the world assurance of his worth. One lamentable fact, one deed of sin and shame, sullies the bright fame of our venerable patriarch. A sad memento that no living man is perfect; that the best and the wisest, if left to their own resources, may become in evil hour the legitimate object of pity or contempt to the weakest or the basest of their fellow men. But let no man pour contempt on the memory of our patriarch for this one offence, perhaps incautiously committed, and which we have no reason to believe was repeated a second time. Let no man think the better of habitual intemperance, because Noah the man of God thus fell in evil hour. It is easy to copy the vices of the best, but it will by no means follow that we have their virtues too. A transient offence, unwittingly committed, bitterly repented, and never again repeated, is a very different thing from habitual indulgence in the ways of sin. It was the praise of our patriarch that he was "a just man, and perfect in his generations; and Noah walked with God." When you merit such a character; when like him you walk with God; then compare yourself with him. But let no man assume his pretensions or his hopes, because in one sad instance there was a like-

ness in their crimes.—Peace to his memory, his offence has been forgiven, his ashes rest in hope, his piety still endears him to the hearts of his posterity, and the spirit of our father rests peacefully in heaven, awaiting the day when he shall again revisit earth; to witness a second and a final restoration from desolations far more fearful than those which he witnessed when its surface had been drenched with the waters of the flood.

We may not now detain you with the many thoughts suggested by that horrible catastrophe whose history we have been tracing for three successive sabbaths. Its ravages still remain as a beacon to all the nations, tradition has carried it down through ten thousand channels to almost every family of the earth. To-day we celebrate another and more recent deliverance from a deluge far more frightful, the deluge of our crimes and a perdition that awaits; we celebrate a kindness which lifts more than a single patriarch with his family of seven souls, a kindness which elevates “an exceeding great multitude which no man can number, of every kindred and tongue and people,” high above the dangers and the fears of that dread hour. And to such celebration it is fit that we should hasten.

Yet ere we quit intirely this affecting subject, let us read what God has written in characters so legible on the certainty and rigor with which he vindicates his holiness.

How often do we hear it quoted with approbation from the scriptures that the living God is no respecter of persons! And how often is this sentiment perversely applied to calm the fears and sustain the hopes of those who live without professing like Noah to walk with God, whose conduct knows no reference to the law supreme, and is never moulded by sentiments of love. Such persons will tell us

that God respects not persons; and therefore they infer that though they neglect his service, profane his institutions, and in the face of earth and heaven disclaim alliance with his Son, that still they shall be saved as well as those who love and trust him, because "God accepteth not the person of any man." Nay, we will point you to a fact much more consonant with the sentiment than are those crude interpretations which you force upon such sayings. We will point you to the deluge in attestation of the truth, that not the pomp of learning, nor the pride of genius, nor the wealth of provinces, nor the veneration of a world, will save any man under heaven from the strict and rigorous execution of heaven's justice. Vain and short-sighted, how ready are we to think that God adopts concerning us that same standard of judgment which we know to be applied to us by our fellow men. And because that glow-worm light, a spark of human genius; because a little learning or a little wealth, bloats up our nothingness in the estimation of our fellows, and we strut our hour in pageantry and pride, we verily believe that Almighty God will reverence these little gifts which his own hand bestows, and will concede to us the importance which our arrogance assumes. Almighty Father! what blushes of shame should mantle in our cheeks, when we reflect that we who are but worms and of yesterday, should feel as if condescending to worship in thy sanctuary, or should bristle up with pride and refuse to ask thy favour.

Fellow mortals, look upon that deluge. There floated the corpse of many a man of talent, many a man of state. But palaces and provinces are now laid beneath the waters, the decorations of a world are floating undistinguished from the drift-wood and the leaves, dark and unexpressive

is now the eye of science, and the tongue of the eloquent is dumb. Goodness alone is valued, goodness alone is safe; such goodness as is bottomed on the fear of God, and is moulded by daily fellowship with him. Goodness rests safely in the bosom of that ark.—Look upon that deluge, mark how the waters roll. Then say if God respects your pitiful acres or your bales of merchandise; say if the Omniscient so estimates your science, as to set any man living above the obligation of his law, above the dangers of its penalty. Where then will be those acres, where then those shops or palaces, when the disembodied spirit stands before his throne; how dim will be your tapers of learning and of genius, when brought under the effulgence of that supreme intelligence, that *infinite* understanding, that undervalued, undiminishing, eternal light.

Nay, look upon that deluge, and tell me what is man in the estimation of his Maker. Say what riches or what numbers the Eternal so respects, as to stain on their account his hitherto spotless glories, the glory of his righteousness, the glory of his truth;—as to consent for their sakes that justice no longer shall be the measure of his doing, that order no more shall be the watchword of his rule.

And now lift your eyes towards the lights of heaven. Were this God's only world, were all his riches here, there would be better ground to think him a respecter of your state. But when we see that this expansive, this interminable universe teems with life and with the habitations of life—when we see eighty million suns, the centres of other systems, the lights of other worlds, shooting their glories from afar to tell us that they exist.—And when we think that all these bodies, all these eighty million suns form but

one little province in this vast creation; when already stand revealed through the aid of optic glass five and twenty hundred provinces, as vast and still more vast; who will talk of his greatness or of the greatness of this earth; who will call it waste that in this universe of life one little world was whelmed beneath its waters, because the dwellers there despised the God of grandeur.

Nay, look upon the variety that decorates creation; see suns innumerable isolated like our own; and then see other suns, various in numbers, in size, and in appearance, how by twos, by threes, and in still greater numbers, they are combined to wheel around one common centre, and pursue their many and their mystic dance. What grandeur dignifies, what variety decorates the face of this creation. Look then upon those heavens which shew the glory of their Maker; look upon the flood which declares to man his righteousness; and now while you may, lay hold upon his power, embrace with our patriarch the faith of God's Messiah, like him display your hope when you worship in his sanctuary, when you mingle with the world. And then expect like Noah his protection and his blessing, though all the world a second time should perish. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou Jehovah, hast not forsaken them that seek thee."

SERMON XII.

BIOGRAPHY OF ABRAHAM.

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

GEN. xii. 1—3.

WHEN the apostle Peter would rebut the grand objection brought by unbelievers of his own and indeed of every age, against the scriptural development of God's purposes and plans, we mean the long delay in the consummation of those plans, he appeals to a fact which all rational and enlightened men admit, the proper eternity of the great Supreme:—"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day." This single but important circumstance accounts sufficiently for the striking difference which every one must notice between the evolution of the purposes of heaven, and the works projected and carried on by man. Circumscribed in our existence, it is natural and even necessary that all our movements should be rapidly conceived and executed with celerity. They are the things of a day in which all our interests centre.

and we feel that it is wisdom when our plans are once conceived to push them on rapidly to their final consummation. Indeed this disposition is so inseparable from our nature, that even when we make excursions into the world of imagination, we picture every thing as regulated on the views and principles common among ourselves. All works of fiction, from the tales of the genii up to the finest effusions of the pagan world, depict superior beings according to this law; and whatever be the wisdom and power with which they are invested or indued; all that wisdom, all that power serves only to secure the more rapid execution of their stupendous plans.

The bible only reveals to us the One Eternal Spirit, and it exhibits all his movements in far other guise. Gradual evolution is the plan of God; and the bible represents him as unfolding in slow succession, plans that boast their commencement in eternity, and run on still unfolding, but ever incomplete till their consummation must be traced through eternity again. This is the bible God. A being, O how different from the phantasies sketched out by men! And this single circumstance is no mean indication that the scriptural delineation is indeed a true and an inspired delineation of the God of this great universe. This one law pervades his universal works, and not singly his work of grace. The acorn that fell this autumn to the ground, liable to perish in the jaws of some animal, little weak and mean, may nevertheless escape, and in the returning spring shoot forth a tender sprig. That little sprig will be liable to be crushed and destroyed forever beneath the lightest tread, or it may bend like a reed under the smallest of the feathered tribe. But should it escape, one thousand years hereafter may exhibit it in far different guise. Then it will send

its roots abroad and strike them deep into the earth, while lifting high toward the heavens and stretching far and wide its venerable branches, it frowns in awful grandeur, the king of all the forest. It is thus throughout all nature that all things take their rise; it is thus that they increase by little and little from smallest beginnings to results incalculable, till crowned with the spoils of accumulated centuries, they speak forcibly to the world of the eternity of him who because he is eternal need never be in haste to consummate his plans.

To-day, my brethren, we mark the small beginnings of a plan, the first germ of a great system which yields to no competitor among the forest oaks, or among the mountain rocks, or among all that is most durable in this material world. The oak of many centuries is at last sluiced of all its sap, and stretching awhile its withered and its naked arms, totters to its fall; rocks themselves may grow, but convulsions will unseat them, the lightnings force will blast them, and they too crumble away, and become soft as common earths. But that great society of men constituted of old for the purposes of salvation, and visibly separated from the world at large, that society first set up in the single person of our venerable patriarch, from him evolved into the myriads of Israel, and embracing at length so many of the gentiles, that church of God so small in its beginnings, that kingdom of Messiah so unimposing in its aspects, still lives, still increases among the nations of the earth; and we behold it at this hour, far from the decrepitude that speaks a speedy fall, we see her in all the vigour of a youth renewed still growing up to greater magnitude, still accumulating greater strength; and now she has been increasing for near four thousand years, we

recognize her as but on the entrance of that bright career, which shall manifest her vigor and multiply her conquests for above a thousand years to come.

It was in the age of Abraham, it was in the person of Abraham that her career commenced. Truth indeed had always had her advocates, and piety her votaries, from the days of our first father. Imperfectly as we have sketched to you a few short memoirs of ante-diluvian worth, you have seen enough to know that such had been the fact. But hitherto we have seen little more than mere isolated examples of goodness and greatness. The domestic circle may have been often cheered by piety. Fathers may have taught their children, and they again reported to another generation, the interesting truths on which human hope is built. But these families, at most but thinly scattered over the face of the earth, were linked together by no common bond; they were not compacted in one great association formally and ostensibly devoted to God, and visibly distinguished from the great mass of the world. It therefore depended on single families and individual persons, whether the knowledge of God should be kept alive in the earth.

So long as the alterations introduced by the deluge had not materially affected the human constitution so as to shorten the duration of life, there was less occasion for that public institution which we call the church of God. It was necessary to connect together the lives of but a very few persons, in order to make them reach down through a great many ages, and thus in a measure secure the purity of traditionary information. Thus, for example, Noah was born but 126 years after the death of Adam, and he lived 350 years after the flood, till within two years of the birth

of Abraham. Thus, with the intervention of two small chasms, amounting together to only 128 years, the whole duration from the creation till the death of Abraham was filled up by three lives. This was a period of 2182 years; for Abraham did not die till 14 years subsequent to the birth of Jacob and Esau.

In fact we can find you three lives that will cover almost all this space without any chasm at all. Methuselah was born 293 years before the death of Adam; and he lived till within a few months of the deluge; at which time Shem the son of Noah was about 100 years old. Shem lived after the flood above 500 years, and died in the year of the world 2158, fourteen years after the death of Sarah the wife of Abraham, and only 24 years before the death of Abraham himself. Thus the single life of Methuselah, who was a long time the cotemporary both of Adam and Shem, presents us with an unbroken series of three lives reaching till within 1846 years of the christian æra. Every one must see that it was next to impossible for tradition to become very corrupt during this long period, unless through a degree of negligence as well as impiety among men greater than we can well imagine. But already the deluge had begun to make havoc of the life of man. The stamina of life become perceptibly weaker in each successive generation; and long before Shem the son of Noah fell under the burden of his years, so robust was a constitution formed before the flood, many of his descendants of the 5th and 6th and 7th generations had died in weak old age. Even Sarah the wife of Abraham, and a descendant of his own in the 9th generation, died before Shem in a good old age.

It was then high time to make other provision for the

interests of truth and of Messiah's kingdom, than that which had answered in more auspicious times. Already the knowledge of truth was beginning to fade from the minds of men, as its power had long before faded from their consciences. The rapid succession of nine generations sufficiently indicates what must soon have been the condition of the world if a merciful Providence had not in good time interposed with a new order of things suited to the novel circumstances of the world. In the call of Abraham then, and in the organization of the church as a visibly distinct and well-defined society, we recognize the germ of one of those stupendous plans which shed such lustre on the ways of Providence.

This patriarch, destined as he was to become the head of a mighty nation, and still more honoured as the head of that great social institution, distinguished of old and consecrated to heaven by the sign of circumcision, and now in latter times by the seal of baptism—this father of the faithful, whose children are to be sought among the Jews and Gentiles, whose children are all who profess their faith in God our common Saviour—this truly dignified personage was not distinguished in his earlier life by any wisdom or goodness that may seem to have entitled him to such a high distinction. At that time, and even for several generations afterwards, God had his worshippers in various parts of the East who were not at all connected with this great association, but whose knowledge and piety stand confest. Such was Melchizedec king of Salem, and others with whom, as we shall see, Abraham maintained intercourse: such too were the famous Job, and many of his friends: such was the father-in-law of Moses, the priest of Midian: and such were many others. All these however

were mere isolated examples. They formed nothing like a church; their piety alone distinguished them as individuals from the world at large.

But when God would lay the foundation of that great association, whose laws and institutions should place it under the bonds of a visible consecration to himself and separation from the world, he chose for the germ of this grand association a person not distinguished either for piety or knowledge. And thus he shewed to all the nations at the very outset, the truth of a principle which you are hearing day by day:—It is not our goodness but our misery that commends us to the mercy of him in whom we trust. And whatever may have been our characters, whatever our demerits, if he pardon us at all he will fully pardon, and then his bounty and tenderness will know no bounds.

The early character and pretensions of our patriarch may be summed up in a single sentence. In after times when Israel alone retained the knowledge of God and all other nations were sunk in pagan wickedness as well as ignorance; while the irradiations of hope beamed forth with the lights that flamed upon God's altar, and the beauty of holiness was seen by none except those who saw the temple of the Lord of Hosts:—even then Israel was directed to be humble as well as thankful for her singular privileges; and to cultivate humility by a constant recurrence to the once hopeless condition of that venerated patriarch from whom she derived her all. "A Syrian ready to perish was my father," said the Israelite as he bowed before the altar of the Lord of Hosts and remembered who it was that had made him to differ from the degraded idolators that filled every other land.

The first annunciation of the honours designed for A-

bram, was uttered in terms particularly imposing; but it was also burdened with a requisition of no trifling magnitude. Abraham was "a Syrian ready to preach." He had been reared and probably born in Ur of the Chaldees, a spot somewhere in the neighbourhood of the banks of the Euphrates. There were the tombs of his fathers. There were the friends of his youth. There were the scenes to which his attachments had grown with his growth. There he would have wished to live. And there he hoped to die. But God met this Syrian. He unfolded to him a destiny far more noble than ever his ambition had ventured to pourtray. He named him as the founder of a mighty nation. He told him he should not only be illustrious in point of dignity, but that future ages should love as well as respect him, his fame should be crowned with blessings. Even among nations of whom he was not to be the father his name should be illustrious, even to them he should be a source of blessing; and all ages, all nations, should know the worth of Abraham; his honours should spread wide as the race of men, and remain unblighted long as time should last.

Honours like these, unsolicited, unexpected, undeserved, were enough to excite the strongest feelings of humiliation as well as gratitude in the bosom of this hitherto undistinguished Mesopotamian. What was he and what was his father's house, that the God of the Universe should thus heap his blessings on him! What had been his deserts that such a fame should be allotted him; a fame so far exceeding that of the great men of the earth—a fame that at this day shines well-defined and obtrusive as the sun in heaven, while the glimmering memorials of earth's mighty chieftains, your Cæsars and your Nimrods, are dim and dissipating like some small and fleecy clouds.

But Abraham was not to inherit this distinction without first making sacrifices of no little difficulty. The tombs of his fathers, the associates of his youth, he must consent to see no more. Mesopotamia and all the adjacent countries were fast receding from the light of life. Abram and his family had also been receding; a perishing Syrian was he. He must leave these lands devoted to idolatry, over which the demons of darkness were already beginning to spread their black and ample wings. He must remove to those spots thereafter designed to be marked as the last refuge of the truth; he must pitch beside those mountains designed to echo praises to the name of Israel's God. This was the first trial of our patriarch's faith and patience. To us who can look through six and thirty hundred years, and note the still unfolding plan of Providence, who can mark the generations rising up in succession from the parent stock, and recognize at this moment almost all nations, according to the prophecy, blessing him and blessed. To us who see so clearly the plan of Providence, and know the veneration which his name inspires—to us it may seem a very light thing that Abram should depart at once for that land in which the destinies of Israel were in due time to be unfolded, and leave his natal Mesopotamia without a single sigh. But it is one thing to acquiesce in the plans of Providence when fully developed before us; and another thing to wait in patience the progress of their slow development, and to trust the word of God, and to confide in his good guidance when we have nothing else to look to. Yet such, it is well known, is the general plan of Providence. His greatest blessings do not fall most suddenly; the bays that deck the foreheads of his most honoured servants spring not up like the goard of Jonah, in a night. But

generally there are delays, disappointments, tribulations, all that can exercise the patience of God's people, and habituate them implicitly to submit their ways to him. This Abram was taught in many bitter lessons; this Israel experienced through successive centuries before a footing was given them in the promised land. It is, my dear friends, the badge of christianity; from the days of Abram down it has been the common lot; you must yourselves expect it. This little church, whose prosperity we know to be dear to the hearts of many of you, may be tried with it—let all people calculate upon it, wheresoever the blessing from on high is hoped. And who will quarrel with this wise arrangement. The plans of Providence, we have told you, are extensive and eternal plans. The foundations of his buildings, whose tops aspire to heaven, are first laid deep and solidly in earth. And though it be a truth that on the day of their foundation the morning may be darkened with heavy floating mists, and the winds of heaven may visit his workmen roughly, yet that brightest sun of heaven in due time dissipates the clouds, and pours upon his labourers and on their favored work the warmth and effulgence of eternal day.

We consent then that our patriarch should take a painful leave of all places and people endeared to him on earth, and should enter on the first stages of his long and bright career with feelings and prospects that no living man would envy. Be it only that he went. Went forth relying on the Divine protection, although he knew not the country or people where Providence would cast his lot. We consent that in going he should drop "some natural tears," and feel as we would—feel like a banished man.

Abram however did not depart alone. He was already united to an amiable woman. A nephew of his own too, a man of many virtues, chose to accompany him and share his uncertain lot; and an aged father who possibly had now no other comforter, or who might have been solicitous to lay his bones in the land which was to become the seat of Abram's future greatness—the aged Terah would not be left behind. This circumstance is noted, but not with great distinctness in the history before us. The death of Terah is recorded in the latter part of the preceding chapter. He died in Charan in Mesopotamia. He never reached the land of Canaan. It is in a measure to account for the circumstance of their being found at Charan, that our historian introduces so abruptly this account of the call of Abraham. For by comparing this account with the comment of Stephen, in the 7th chapter of Acts, you will perceive that it was while Abraham resided in Ur of the Chaldees, that the call was given; there it was that his journey was commenced; and Terah died at Charan while they were yet upon the road.

We cannot leave so venerable a man, the parent of Abraham the chief of patriarchs, without soliciting your attention to this affecting circumstance. To see aged persons change their residence at the extremest verge of life, and thus break in on all those strong associations which had furnished the last earthly solace to the heart—to see them do it at an age when no new attachments can possibly be formed, and no new employments fill up the painful hours once devoted to recollections so natural and soothing; to witness this is at all times an affecting occupation. But in the case of Terah we see such a change attempted under circumstances that blend admiration with our sympa-

thy. The command which compelled the removal of Abraham could not be unknown to him; and that he should have thus cast in his lot with the wanderer, departing himself could not tell whither, bespeaks not only a strong affection for his son; it indicates that like Abram he too had faith in God, and was so disposed to confide in his wisdom and goodness as to share the lot which had been appointed for his son.

At all events we contemplate a sight among the most pleasing that this earth is ever permitted to behold—We contemplate a parent now in second childhood, fondly and confidently reclining on a son for that protection and support which had been so fondly given when that son was in his childhood. Nor rests there under heaven feelings more pure from every mortal taint than those which are reciprocated between virtuous manhood and declining age, when now the children are the solace of the parent, as the parent was once the solace of the child. Nor see we under heaven a sight so truly grateful as when children, the pride as well as hope of virtuous parents, repay them with a solicitude tender and overflowing as their infancy had experienced, and mingling their tenderness with the homage due to age. Nor scan we under heaven a nobler benefit flowing from piety pure and undefiled, than the truth and tenderness which it imparts to all the finer feelings of the heart, thus strengthening all the bonds and multiplying the enjoyments, and smoothing the many ills of social life.—Yes; all that is most tender in human feeling, and all that is most elevated in human sentiment, and all that is most firm in human resolution, will spread their roots within a christian soil: and far as heaven from earth is the spirit of the gospel from the selfish and politic and

cold-blooded being, profess it as he may, who, living mainly for himself, feels not the thrilling impulse of the charities of life.

Far other was the spirit of the patriarch Abraham. That aged parent wished not to be separated from his son. And unsuited as was the journey to the decrepitude of age, forbidding as was the circumstance that he himself knew not the place of destination—Yet far be it from him to cross the anxious wishes of the parent who had loved him: far be it from him to shun any pains or dangers to which this burden might expose him on a route unknown; if the relief was to be purchased at the pitiable alternative of leaving such a parent unprotected in his age, a melancholy prey to regrets and anxieties such as old men feel when their last prop has been withdrawn, the only remaining object of affection failed them; then perish forever the earthly hopes of Abram, before he would leave a parent to regrets so unavailing. Yes, my father, our lot shall be the same; one shall be our travel, and our habitation one. And when old age lingers from the fatigues of that long journey, the arm of Abraham shall support the feeble step; and should rudeness assault thee in that land of strangers, the eye of Abraham shall dart a withering glance; and should sickness smite thee, as at length it must, the care of Abraham shall smooth the dying bed, the ear of Abraham shall catch the dying sigh, the hand of Abraham shall wipe the dewy forehead, and close at length the eyes when set in death.

Thus they moved together to the land of promise. But Terah never reached it. When they had reached the place called Charran, in the west of Mesopotamia, and about 150 miles to the east of modern Antioch, the days of

the aged traveller were numbered. His ashes rest in Charan. There our patriarch was delayed for a considerable time; we know not how long, but it would seem to have been for years. At length however he proceeded, for as yet he knew not the place of destination. He proceeded when warned by a second intimation, and came to the land where should dwell a mighty nation, whose progenitor was he alone. His arrival in Canaan forms no mean epoch in the history of the world. To Abraham it was a moment of uncommon interest. But we may not attend him now. On next Lord's day we will accompany that cavalcade as they first set their feet on the land of their inheritance. To-day we intended no more than to introduce you to our patriarch, to mark his beginnings and to trace his dispositions. He is the little germ of a stupendous system; it was leisurely unfolded, and we mean to view it leisurely. To-day we only invite you to note a general law. Abraham, designated to such distinguished honours, the father of all the faithful, and the friend of God, a man of resplendent and eternal fame—He began his course in circumstances dark and difficult; and, as you will ere long see, in circumstances dark and difficult that course was long continued. Fit emblem was he of that greater One than Abraham—that second Man for heaven. The beginning of his course, though now all the nations bless him, though all the angels worship him—the beginning of his course was in self-denial and in pain. Though in the form of God, he stooped to take upon him “the form of a servant;” though heir of all things, he had not where to lay his head; though destined to a glory co-extensive with the universe, boundless as eternity, he bowed his head to indignity and scorn.—But now Abraham is exalted:

high among the powers and principalities of heaven the patriarch takes his seat, and all the nations bless him:— Now the Saviour is exalted; high above all principalities and powers and might and dominion and every name that is named, the Saviour takes his seat; and “at the name of Jesus every knee must bow.” Who then will be dissatisfied with the christian discipline because its first beginnings are in gloom and pain? or who will aspire to the triumph of the cross, but hoping to escape its pain. We point you to the path in which Almighty Providence has hitherto led the fathers. You see its character and you see its end. We point you to the warning of the Saviour himself; he needs no arts to conceal the hardships of his service; he manifests them all; but he displays its triumphs too. Thus then has he written it to all who would be with him that they may behold his glory: “If any man will come after me let him take up his cross and follow me.” And if any man have ears let him hear what is thus directed, not only to the churches, but to all the world.

SEMON XIII.

BIOGRAPHY OF ABRAHAM.—(CONTINUED.)

And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.” Gen. xii. 6.

“YE know the heart of a stranger; for ye yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt.”—Such was the appeal which the God of Israel made to an uncultivated people, in a barbarous age, when he would enlist their best feelings in behalf of the stranger, unknown and unfriended, in a stranger-land. It was not in behalf of any worshipper of his, that the God of their fathers thus addressed the Israelites; it was in behalf of the wanderer from the pagan nations around, who might at any time seek the shelter of their more happy homes. We know of no case in which a sense of duty will be more powerfully seconded by those lively feelings to which experience alone gives being, than that on which this appeal is grounded. They who had been strangers in the land of Egypt had known the anguish of indignity and oppression—they had felt what it is to be without a country, without resources, and without a friend—they could not but remember how bitter, far above the bitterness of death, to sink not only beneath the respect, but below the pity of their fellow men;

to become an outcast whose tears no man regarded. And could they now, when settled at last in a country and a home that they might call their own, when abundance crowned them, when friendships blessed them, when their importance was conceded by society around—could they so far forget the feelings of their bondage, as to embitter by neglect the already lacerated feelings of the stranger who would have enough to remind him, without their cold repulses, that Palestine was not his country, and that his friends were far away.

We might hold up to you this appeal, as no faint illustration of the strong and tender sympathies of that Father of mercies whom it is above all things our wish that you should know. But we bend it this morning to a far humbler purpose; we use it to shed light on the emotions of our patriarch, when, passing with his family the limits of Palestine, he first pitched his tents within the land of promise. Abram, indeed, was not that servant, cheerless and oppressed, such as his descendants were seen in after times, when driven and trampled by the Egyptian king. His family were with him, he was master of his own time, and Providence had endowed him with ample wealth. But still he was a wanderer, far from his native home: his was a single family in a land of strangers: no man knew him, no man cared for his peace.—Your modern traveller who visits foreign countries in all the security and pomp of travelled wealth; whose letters introductory usher him at once into those high circles where courtesy and vanity equally secure him a cheerful welcome and princely entertainment—such a traveller knows nothing about the stranger's heart: he sees every thing around him through a deceitful medium, in its gayest livery. But if there are any

among you who were ever far from home, among a people where no one took an interest in your welfare; where the eye that beamed in kindness on many a passing object, glanced carelessly at you; if in difficulties and dangers, "no man said God save you;" or if you have wandered among a people lawless and uncultivated, where your very possessions were the source of greatest danger:—then *you* can enter into the feelings of our patriarch when he pitched at first among the hordes of Palestine: you will know what it is to feel lonely and disconsolate, while the glance of the stranger falls carelessly upon you, yet seems to strike home as if darted by a baselisk: you well know how the heart, tremblingly alive to every little circumstance, startles and then sickens at each unusual sound; then musters all its energies to dwell with tenfold force on the remote acquaintance and forsaken home.—We would have *you* to paint the feelings of this little cavalcade when entering the borders of their adopted country they first mingled with the men of that uncultivated age, whose names and characters were equally unknown.

They passed on, we are told, among the descendants of Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, by whose name the country is to this day often called; nor did they halt till they had traversed almost the half of it, when they fixed their abode in the plain of Moreh. It is a spot since rendered famous in evangetic story. It was thence that Jacob afterwards fled the men of Shechem; and it was there, by a well which Jacob himself had digged, that the Saviour maintained that long and interesting conversation with the woman of Samaria recorded in the fourth chapter of John, and first opened up to those erratic Gentiles the gospel of salvation.

There, we are told, God again appeared to him, and announced that this was the land promised as his heritage while yet he was in Chaldea. It is useless to inquire in what manner this manifestation of the Deity took place. We who know so little of ourselves, who can form no clear conception of any substance corporeal or spiritual, and are equally lost in attempting to trace out the operations of matter and of mind, we cannot be expected to form conceptions of the manner in which the Eternal Spirit unfolds himself to men. We cannot even mount to any conception of the manner in which that awful presence is rendered perceptible to the spirits of heaven; much less can we say how God will stand revealed to the hosts of his redeemed after the general resurrection, when in body as well as spirit they shall stand before his throne and see him face to face. But one thing is most clear. To the Infinite One there is neither place nor boundaries. God lives in all things, and all things live and move in God. Earth and heaven are equally before him; and he is equally present in both. If any where, then, he can stand unveiled to men, if he have access at all to the senses of his creatures, no difficulty can arise from the mode of their existence or from the place of their abode. Our difficulty arises from the withdrawal of his presence, which takes place in the punishment of a sinful world. And because we are alone in this great universe of life, because we are strangers to that free and fixed communion which holiness may not maintain with the rebellious and impure, we are apt to call in question the reality of appearances which we have never witnessed; and marshal such objections as, if they proved any thing at all, would prove the impossibility of any manifestation of the Deity at any time or

place, and would cut off all creation from communion with its God.—We know not how God appeared to Abram—but we know that he is every where; and we doubt not his power to lift our perceptions to the apprehension of himself, as we know that he has fitted them to apprehend things around us.

It is of more consequence to notice the tempers with which our patriarch received these communications. The first annunciation of Abram's future lot had been made in very indefinite, though in highly magnificent terms. On this occasion we discover something a little more definite, and as we proceed you will perceive that every new communication serves to define more and more clearly the great events at first so indistinctly named. Indeed this is one of the uniform laws of prophecy, and it maintains a strong analogy with the general laws of Providence. The egg about to be quickened into life by the vital warmth of the incumbent fowl, presents at first a few faint and bloody streaks, furnishing a kind of outline for the more important parts, but still nothing that can indicate the future perfect form. In process of time we trace an eye and an heart; then all the parts unfold in due proportion, and the little creature pierces at length its shell, and looks abroad upon the wondrous world around. Thus God has fashioned his scriptural scheme of prophecy. A first indefinite and shawdowy intimation, is fashioned and filled up by successive revelations, till we trace distinctly every portion of his stupendous plans, and can speak with precision of the times and the manner in which the future shall be evolved.

But to Abram there was nothing very encouraging in this increase of light. Nothing was said to him, while in

Chaldea, about the time. But that very silence afforded room to hope that his own eyes should see the budding honours of his race; that his own hand should grasp the resources of Palestine, and convey them down in succession to the men of future times. But now he is taught to expect no such great things for himself. He is told that God would at a future day bestow that land upon his descendants. But Abram is now an old man, and he has no child. Remote indeed is the prospect of this inheritance which he had come so far to gather. God is faithful, and he must expect that his posterity would one day master it; but what remains to him, an old and banished man, but the prospect of spending the residue of his years without a country, and of leaving to his descendants to acquire for themselves a land which he had fondly hoped himself to bestow upon them.

It was but natural that such a discovery should chill the warm feelings of our aged patriarch. But still it did not shake his piety; it did not undermine his faith. To whom could he go, under these discouraging circumstances, so properly as to the Being who had brought him hither? From whom should he seek the consolations of friendship, when doomed to spend the residue of his years in a land where he had no place that he might call his home, if not from the converse of God Omnipresent, who shelters under his wings all them that trust in him? If he might not provide an hearth, he could at least prepare an altar. And it was proper that "the stranger" should not forget "the stranger's shield." Far different in this case was the course of Abram from that pursued by most of those who are burdened with the perplexities of an unsettled life. Yet how foolish to make the multiplicity of our cares a plea

for neglecting the God of Providence who watches over all! How unfortunate to overlook the most steadfast and powerful friend when cast among strangers, where we are apt to feel most sensibly our loneliness and helplessness! How wicked to waste at a distance from the throne of God the moments best calculated to call forth the strongest and tenderest feelings of the heart!! O, let the traveller and the stranger recollect how soon they may be plunged into circumstances of utter helplessness, where none is disposed to aid them, and none will care for them but God; and then let them say whether it is wise to forfeit his protection by neglecting to solicit it; or whether it is not better to prepare, like Abram, their altar, though they pitch their tent but for one night in Moreh. The worldling may be brought to do homage to high heaven in seasons of full leisure, or on days of state; but it is the province of that piety which fits the human mind to maintain uninterrupted fellowship in the world of spirits—it is the province of that piety to account as chief on earth, the employments and interests which shall undoubtedly be chief when earth is ours no more.

Circumstances of which no account is left us, rendered the plain of Moreh an undesirable abode; and in a short time we find our patriarch removing about twenty miles further southward, and pitching his tent at the foot of a mountain between Bethel and Hai, not more than twelve miles to the north-east of the site of the afterwards famous Jerusalem. It was a portion of that rocky plain where the wandering Jacob slept when flying from the fury of his brother; and was by no means adapted to the numerous flocks and herds of Abram and Lot. He was probably compelled to take up his abode on so unpropitious a

spot, by the numerous Canaanites who claimed the country, and would be naturally unwilling that the flocks of a stranger should consume the pasturage which they needed for their own.

His abode in that spot was consequently short. Again, we are told, "he journeyed, going on still toward the south."—But short as was his stay by the mountain of Luz, it was of sufficient duration to demand the erection of another altar. The ceremonials which typified the atonement of Messiah, were both laborious and expensive. Independently of that more direct and less formal intercourse with heaven, which is common to the patriarchal, the mosaic, and the christian church, when the worshippers of the Most High raise the voice of thanksgiving or prostrate themselves in humble supplication, the New Testament has her supper to shew forth Messiah's death; it is simply bread and wine; while under the old economy there was the altar and the knife by which many a costly sacrifice was immolated and consumed. But the shortness of his stay, the labour or the expense, did not influence our patriarch to dispense with the accustomed altar. He felt and he acted as short-lived mortals should do, whose high privilege it is to maintain intercourse with heaven; and who know that the time must speedily arrive, when of all their occupations and of all their acquisitions there will remain to them nothing that can console or bless, except what they may have treasured up for the world to come. And who will not prefer—ininitely prefer the spirit of our patriarch, erecting an altar wherever he pitched his tent, and assembling all his family to bow around it as it blazed: who will not prefer the condition of a man who, though a wanderer, still derived consolation from his

piety, confidence from the power, and gladness from the fellowship of God—to the condition of that man, be his pretensions what they may, who is without one real friend in heaven or upon earth; and who, compelled to rely solely on his own resources, feels his spirits sink and his hope wither just in proportion as those resources fail! Precious at all times, but doubly precious in the day of our adversity is the assured kindness of our Almighty Maker. Tender as we paint to ourselves some pitying angel, far more tender is that God of all the angels who gave them what they have of sympathy and goodness; and happy are they who cultivate, like Abram, the regards of such a friend. He will never be the first to break off a settled intercourse. If in the day of our prosperity he has our best affections—far be it from him to desert a friend who loved him—in the day of our calamity he will prove a tower of strength.

But we pray you mark the emphasis with which this circumstance is noted: “he builded an altar unto the Lord,” and did not then devolve it upon others to worship him whose altar was prepared; he himself bent low before that altar, “and called upon the name of the Lord.” Oh, would to God it might never be recorded that men act far less rationally in many a christian land. Would to God it never could be said that many a temple rises fair toward the heavens, and others draw nigh to offer their homage to the Lord of Hosts, while they by whose enterprize that temple was founded, by whose liberality it was completed and adorned, forget that it is provided to build men up for salvation; and disdaining to reap advantage from their own munificence, and forgetful that the Saviour is God’s greatest gift to man, help others to a salvation which they themselves neglect. Let no man imagine that his altar will ev-

er profit him if he neglect communion with the God of Hosts. That fountain of liberality will indeed reward the minutest service which his people render him. The Saviour himself has said it, that when he shall judge the world he will not overlook even a cup of water given to a disciple for his Master's sake. But where will be the room to heap recompense on them who by neglecting the Saviour fall short of his salvation. To our pardon or justification no work of ours contributes. The Saviour suffers all. The Saviour obeys for all. And it is only the person who bowing before that altar, fit emblem of the sacrifice of Messiahs cross; it is only the person who devoutly trusts to him and follows him and worships him, that can ever be in a condition to receive a recompense. If other reward be given, this life alone must witness it. There is but the one name given under heaven among men, by which they can be saved.

It was well for our patriarch that he possessed this spirit of unflinching piety, for new trials awaited him which more than equalled the utmost of his resources. He was not long fixed in his new situation, before a mighty famine arose in the land. That country which was to sustain the descendants of Abram, when numerous as the stars of heaven, was found inadequate to provide for the consumption of the comparatively small numbers who at present occupied it. And he who had sought it as the home of his old age, and had looked to see it abundant in those resources which should give wealth to his posterity, was obliged, after roaming from place to place, to desert it altogether.

Still moving to the south, they fled for Egypt. And here a new series of difficulties awaited him. But they were difficulties from which he did not escape so safely and hon-

ourably as he had done from those which before had thronged around him. Discouraged, no doubt, by the numerous disappointments that had already befallen him in a land in which he had anticipated a far different lot, and well nigh overwhelmed by this last calamity which augured so ill for his future prospects, he was assailed on his departure with a new and strong temptation. He had witnessed much of the oppressions and misrule of power in the country of Chaldea; he had no doubt found society but little better regulated among the tribes of Palestine; and as Egypt was still more distant from the original seats of man, it was natural to suppose that there he might expect to see less of the fear of God, and to be more in danger from the craft or power of men. Sarai, his wife, was uncommonly beautiful; and he feared that the Egyptians would make little scruple about rising upon a stranger, or practising secretly against his life, in order to render her their own without dispute. An account of the conduct that sprang from these reflections fills up the remainder of the chapter. The history is interesting, but at the same time so plain as scarcely to require a comment. It is sufficient to remark that our now discouraged veteran forgot that God is an all-sufficient helper. In fear of his life, in fear that force or treachery might assail it, while he left none behind him to perpetuate his name, the promise of descendants who yet should cover Canaan, the promise of that country as a sure and ample heritage, appears not to have been regarded as a guarantee of life. In evil hour he staggered and ceased to trust in God. And now he was left to lean on his own resources, we pray you mark the schemes he adopted and the character he for the time sustained. He fell from the independence of high-mind-

ed virtue—he fell from the frank and ingenuous courses which it is the privilege of none but the innocent to tread. Sarai was his half-sister, as well as his wife; she was the daughter of his father, though of a different mother. To prevent the plots of the Egyptians against his life, he resolved to conceal their more intimate relationship, and to acknowledge her only as his sister. Thus he calculated on deceiving the Egyptians by telling half the truth. And full of this scheme he addressed himself to Sarai, in the most moving style: “he said unto Sarai, his wife,” &c.—“My soul shall live because of thee.” We will not say that there was nothing moving in this appeal to the generosity of Sarai. But surely it was not flattering to the affection of his wife to suppose that such a moving plea was necessary. It was by no means honourable to the feelings of Abram to suspect that Sarai stood in need of such an impulse to shield a husband’s life.—But we forget that Abram had already ceased to trust the kind and faithful protection of his Maker: it was distrust of God that led him to the adoption of this crooked policy; and it cannot be surprising that they who have buried all right feelings toward God, and who can themselves meanly stoop to disingenuous courses, should be forward to distrust the integrity of others too.

Sarai, however, if she felt the wrong, does not appear to have resented it. She agreed to the arrangement proposed by Abram; and under protection of this poor and mean deceit, which imbecility had borrowed to supply the place of confidence in God, down they came together to the land of Egypt. There most happily the state of society proved far better than our patriarch had anticipated. In Egypt the law was still supreme, for it was guaranteed by some

remaining fear of God. Had Abram discovered this, before he announced his relationship to Sarai, there would have been no reason for their supporting the deception. But the step appears to have been taken irrecoverably before they were aware that it was by no means necessary. They could not afterwards recall it without certain and indelible disgrace.

And now mark the natural consequence of their crooked course. Abram indeed was safe from fraud and violence. That he would have been, though he had publicly owned his wife. He was even caressed and loaded with wealth, on account of his sister Sarai. But what now was life to him who loved her tenderly; of what value were additional servants and flocks to him who was already lord of more than would have rendered a dozen men quite wealthy. The beautiful Sarai, the wife of his youth, was likely to cease from being his forever. The fame of her beauty had reached the court of Pharaoh. As the sister of Abram, any man might address her. And as polygamy was even then common in the East, there was no reason why the monarch might not add another to his collection of beauties. She was taken to his house, and began to submit to that preparatory training so indispensable to the exaltation of an eastern sultana. And now might our patriarch well rue the day in which he deserted confidence in heaven for the shallow and disengenuous devices of his cunning. Had he now put in his claim he had no security that it would have been regarded by the monarch: he had no security that his Sarai herself might not be seduced by the splendor of her destiny to leave him, an old and hapless stranger, and cleave to her Egyptian lord.

But that Providence which he had distrusted, dishon-

oured, deserted, was kind to him at the moment when thus bowed down under sorrow, sin and shame. "The Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai, Abram's wife." What was the nature of this visitation, we do not pretend to guess. It is sufficient that the Egyptians were wise to discern the tokens of offended heaven. And strict inquisition being made for the cause, it was discovered that Sarai was the wife of Abram. Thus our patriarch was delivered from hopeless sorrow; but he was at the same time whelmed under well-deserved and public shame. God, who had interposed to save him from a calamity which must have overthrown forever his towering prospects, would nevertheless not remit this penance, doubtless the most painful which an elevated and ingenuous mind can feel.

We pass over the indignant but appropriate expostulation of the Egyptian king. It is sufficient to remark that it affords undoubted evidence of the safety and honour that would have awaited Abram had he relied on that Providence which compelled his flight to Egypt, and refused to listen to those fears which prompted a policy so disingenuous and dishonorable. And now the truth once discovered in a way which exposed him to the bitterest self-reproach, and to the contempt and indignation of the very men who had sheltered him and honoured him; he is admitted no more to the presence of him whose confidence he had most abused: "Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him, and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had."

We will not follow our patriarch to-day on his return to Palestine. Painful and humiliating as it really was to be thus roughly and contemptuously dismissed, painful as it

is to us to contemplate this blot in one of the brightest characters that ever adorned human nature, we leave his memory for a while to the well-merited shame of disingenuousness and cowardice. It is fit that you should know him as he really was, a man of like passions and weaknesses with others; it is fit that you should see with what unsparing freedom the scriptures delineate the faults as well as excellencies of their most favored characters; it is fit that you should see that Abram, as an offender, had good and frequent reason to betake him to those sacrifices which symbolized the efficacy of Messiah's death; and it is fit that you should see that in our weak and wicked world the best often fall far below that region of moral grandeur, in which our thoughtlessness is apt to dictate that the sincerely pious must of necessity uniformly move, or forfeit their claim to the name and hopes of christians.

But let no man pour contempt on the memory of our patriarch, because he sometimes fell. At least let none attempt it but those who take up their home in the heights to which he generally soared, and successfully buffet the whirlwinds that sometimes brought him down. On next Lord's day we will prove this man a hero, who once trembled and fell before imaginary dangers: we will shew him to you opposing his single might to a host of many kings; his single household to their well-appointed armies: and with unequalled magnanimity and with unrivalled modesty, consecrating to friendship and to God a victory that to this hour ranks him among the first of heroes as well as first of men.

Till then we leave our patriarch, after having learned from him this single lesson; that still the fear of God is the beginning of true wisdom; and that he who is so un-

reasonable as to distrust his Maker, or so timid and base as to violate his laws through any fear of man or hope of human favor, can give no security to the church or to the world, to friend or stranger, that he will act fairly and honourably towards them. What pledge can be afforded of that man's honesty or firmness, who acts weakly and dishonourably toward the first of beings? And what is the guarantee on which any man may lean, who, deserting, like Abram, an honest open course under all-protecting Providence, reposes for safety in the tortuous courses of his own devising. Be it ours to remember and to profit by the experience of one who tried far other ways and found that they were safe: "Thou will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."—*Amen.*

SERMON XIV.

BIOGRAPHY OF ABRAHAM.—(CONTINUED.)

“And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south,” &c.—Gen. xiii. 1—.

WE know not how it is that the world has dignified with the titles of amiableness and goodness of heart that pitiable weakness that can discern, or at least acknowledge, no blemish in any of our friends. True wisdom dictates that the judgment only is valuable that is according to the truth; and however praiseworthy it may be to cover the failings of our fellows with the mantle of our charity, yet there is no goodness in approving what candor must condemn, nor is it the office of true friendship to palliate the deed which all men discover to be wrong. Were we to choose a friend on whose good offices we might rely to clear our fame from undeserved reproach, or to attest our merits in the audience of a stranger, it should be the person whose penetration can discern a fault, and whose stubborn candor will compel him to acknowledge it; for such a course, while it bespeaks his candor and discernment, raises him high above the suspicion of those weak partialities which preclude our confidence in less judicious friends, and will secure undoubted currency to all that he may attest for our glory or our good.

It was the peculiar felicity of many ancient worthies to have their actions recorded and their characters delineated by a hand that challenges a confidence the most implicit. While the story of their pilgrimage furnishes ample details for our warning and instruction, incredulity itself dare not impute weak partiality to the delineations of their excellence, nor will the most scrupulous call in question the correctness of their history. The being who has furnished it stands equally remote from the possibility of being himself mistaken, and from the suspicion of being capable of deceiving others. His delineations are therefore valuable, for they have truth and nature; and while the perusal may amuse us it makes us wiser and better. In the scriptures we recognize no piety without alloy, no fame without a spot. We are instructed by the prudence, we are charmed with the amiableness, we are animated by the triumphs of the indubitably virtuous; but we are almost as frequently warned by their falls and cautioned by their punishment.

We left the patriarch Abram, on last Lord's day, humbled and dishonored by a shameful departure from him whom he had formerly honoured with a confidence that had stood the test of many a previous trial. We saw how readily repeated disappointments and accumulated sorrows may prevail for a moment to divest the noblest minds both of candor and of courage; and we saw what all who try it will sooner or later infallibly discover, that no one will fare the better for yielding to the fear of man where the fear of God should guide him, or for leaning on the resources of cunning and contrivance, rather than adopting a plain ingenuous course and casting himself implicitly on the Almighty for protection.

But Abram loses nothing by this record of his follies. We may venerate indeed those imaginary characters which biography sometimes draws without one spot or weakness: but we love as well as venerate that exalted goodness which we see combined with feelings and failings like our own. The elastic spirit of heaven-imparted virtue will not brook the degradation of crawling always on the earth. Though it fall from that high element which is its proper sphere, it will infallibly rebound and move loftily as ever. "Though the just man fall seven times a day, the Lord will lift him up." This facility is known to christianity alone. The creature who hopes salvation without the intervention of a Saviour, has nothing to re-animate, nothing to sustain him, whence once he has fallen, guilty and dishonoured. Guilt takes away his confidence in God, suspicion and fear alienate his heart, and virtue failing as affection withers, he adopts the language of the Fiend in paradise, "furthest from him is best," and sinks degraded in selfishness and malice. But let us only hear that assurance from the scriptures, "if any man sin, there is an advocate with the Father;" let us know how to prepare our altar and our victim; let us have sufficient encouragement to act upon the principle, "there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared:" and then, though like Abram we sadly fall in Egypt, we will renew our vigour as we move for Palestine.

Abram returned to the Father of mercies; the Father of mercies readily received him: and pitching again his tent in the stony plain of Luz, by the place of the altar he had formerly erected, he re-fits the altar and again provides the sacrifice. The very next events connected with his history prove that he had lost nothing of the grandeur of his sentiments or vigor of his piety.

The patriarch was rich before he went down into Egypt. The partiality of Pharaoh had added to his wealth; and he returned to Palestine "very rich in cattle, in silver and in gold." His domestics too, it would seem, were well nigh as numerous as those which crowded the palaces of European potentates. But the world has long since learned that the increase of riches by no means guarantees an increase of felicity. Lot, the nephew of Abram, had hitherto accompanied him in all his wanderings and shared in all his dangers. In early life, while yet he lived in Chaldaea, he had lost his father Haran. His uncle Abram had from that time supplied the place of a parent to him. And when the mandate came compelling the departure of our patriarch from his country, and announcing the future greatness of his posterity in Palestine, Lot chose to accompany him, though no mandate from on high enforced his banishment from the land of his nativity, and no promise cheered him with the hope of the safety and honors that heaven had guaranteed to his venerable relative. You will yourselves be the judges how such interchange of kindness and fellowship in sufferings must have endeared to one another the society of these men. Under ordinary circumstances they must have felt a deep interest in spending together the remainder of lives that had been thus far passed in mutual acts of kindness and condolence. Much more must it have appeared desirable to cleave together, remote as they were from all other friends and relatives, and surrounded by multitudes from whom every thing was to be apprehended, and nothing to be sought. For again it is remarked with considerable emphasis, "the Canaanite and the Perrizzite dwelt then in the land. No dangers, no difficulties, could separate these affectionate relatives.

But that which no adverse circumstance was capable of effecting, was speedily brought about by the excess of prosperity. Let it add one to the long list of warnings how readily abundance destroys the finer and keener sensibilities of the human heart, and renders men less capable of appreciating the only solid and permanent felicity that the universe ever witnessed, or to eternity will witness, the strong and pure emotions of a strong and true attachment. It appears as though in this erratic world of ours a sense of mutual dependance is the only sufficient bond to bind men's hearts together; that in the earlier stages of society or among the more dependant classes of the community, the finest samples of social feelings and felicity are to be found; and that precisely in proportion as men rise high above the fear of want or necessity of exertion, they seek in themselves the happiness of their existence, and give the better feelings of friendship and of affectionate solicitude—give all that really constitutes their true felicity, like chaff, to the winds of heaven.

Excess of prosperity enforced the separation of these long tried friends; and just when placed in circumstances in which they might have lived more happily together, they agreed to part company and spend the remainder of their lives with strangers. It was a quarrel among their servants that enforced this step. A dispute between their herdmen, probably in relation to the use of some well of water, an article always of difficult attainment and of more than common necessity in Judea, seemed likely to involve the masters in the quarrel. Our patriarch, however, would submit to any sacrifice rather than cultivate hostility toward his kinsman. He himself proposed the separation, and in doing so furnished a fine example of that mag-

nanimity and modesty which are among the first distinctions of a truly elevated and virtuous mind. Abram was the elder; he had been Lot's protector; to him very probably Lot had been indebted for no small portion of his wealth; and it was his unquestionable right to have urged in this instance his claim to a prior choice, provided he chose to do so. But he magnanimously gave up his rights to the inferior; he left it to Lot to choose the place of his abode, and contented himself with occupying what the other might refuse. "And Abram said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren. *Is* not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left."—Gen. xiii. 8, 9.

To Abram it has happened according to that which is written in the scriptures, "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The moderation and magnanimity of our patriarch on this occasion have been admired and celebrated through all ages and nations; and he who tarnished the brightness of his fame in Egypt is universally conceded to have done much more than wipe away that blemish when both the right and power unquestionably belonged to him. Nor did he derive honour alone from this prompt concession to the younger and the weaker. We shall speedily see that a mighty and mysterious Providence rendered his humility the shield of future safety; while Lot, who had the preference, employed it to his hurt. He chose the left hand route and pitched his tents in the delightful vale of Jordan. Watered by that river and its few tributary streams, it stretched above fifty miles from

north to south, varying from ten to twenty in its breadth; and is represented as being one of the most fruitful and delightful spots on earth: "Like the land of Egypt, like the garden of the Lord," says our historian. But abundance had enervated its favored inhabitants: already they bowed under a foreign yoke: Prosperity had long corrupted them: "they were wicked," says my text, "and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." But Lot—the thoughtless and unhappy Lot looked only at the climate, thought only of the pasturage, luxuriant and abundant: he chose the plain of Sodom, though it was a land of slaves; he joined the social circles of the men of Sodom, though "sinners before the Lord exceedingly." Years rolled on, and you shall mark the consequences of this improper—may I not say of this *unprincipled* choice?

Meanwhile our patriarch continued a while longer in the rocky plain of Luz. He was now left alone among the Canaanites. And yet he was not alone. A present Deity had seen his moderation, and well knew how to recompense it. The first keen sensations which he must naturally have felt at parting with his nephew were speedily succeeded by far different emotions, when new assurances of his future greatness, and of the unfailing—unbounded goodness of Providence were communicated to him in another revelation. "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through

the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it: for I will give it unto thee." Gen. xiii. 14—17. That man is never alone who maintains his fellowship with the Father of his mercies: that man is never in danger, though the Canaanites surround him, who dwells for shelter under the shadow of his wings; that man is never wretched to whom Providence has guaranteed all that is absolutely needful in this world and life everlasting in the world to come. Abram remains still in the rugged plain near Bethel: but he has a companion in his loneliness; it is the Father of his mercies. The flocks of Lot are revelling on the luxuriant vale of Jordan, but he exchanges acts of friendship with the unprincipled slaves of Sodom. O, many are the Sodomites that dwell in many lands, and many are the Lots who hold them to their hearts, while estranged from the circles that bow around the altar, and far from the fellowship of the Lord of Hosts. Wait but a little, a very little time, and he now the most humble shall rise up in the strength and in the awfulness of virtue, while enervated vice shrinks like a coward from the dangers it had invited, and drags along with it its friendships into captivity and death.

Our patriarch in obedience to the heavenly vision removed his tents, and wandering again to the southward fixed his abode in the plain of Mamre, the centre of the country which afterwards fell to the lot of Judah when Palestine was portioned out among the tribes of Israel. There he was not forgetful of Jehovah who had appeared to him, but again prepares the altar and provides the sacrifice. Behold the stedfast nature of real christian piety; see how it displays itself, unobtrusive yet imposing—always to be recognized without keen discrimination, always to be dis-

covered without anxious search, because the regulator of the conduct, the business of the life. Abram, we must repeat it, never omitted to provide an altar, because his stay was uncertain and his avocations multiplied. At this hour he reaps the profit of his unremitted devotion. The dust of our patriarch sleeps in the cave of Machpelah: long has he rested from his fatiguing journeys: his wealth and his hopes, his sorrows and his joys, all that could interest the wanderer's heart, all that could plead for his neglect of God, is as though it had never been. But the fruit of his piety remains. The spirit thus moulded and purified and elevated by acts of piety and by intercourse with heaven, met, when entering on the eternal world, with a friend it had known before; and he who was thus honoured by his worshipper on earth, now honours and blesses him in heaven.

But calamity is written at the head of every page of human history, and it is vain for any one to hope that they shall long avoid it. That calm retirement, that soothing peace, that remoteness from the turmoils and difficulties of life, to which we all look forward as the summit of our earthly wishes, no one on earth ever yet attained; or if they have attained it, never long enjoyed. They who are shielded by a conduct and lot peculiarly happy from personal exposure to the common ills of life, will often have to experience anxieties and fears when calamity assails them through the persons of their friends. They cannot encircle all in whose happiness they take an interest in the peaceful mansion and devout society which witnesses their own. And they must part with all concern in the welfare of others—they must become unworthy of tranquility before they can enjoy it—for man may not cease from suffering until he cease to feel.

Abram rested tranquilly in the plains of Mamre: in the occupations and cares connected with the pastoral life, and in the devotions of the altar, his days rolled on quietly and tranquilly. But his tranquilly was interrupted by most disastrous news. A man of the plains of Jordan, escaped from a battle, or rather from a rout, brought him intelligence that his nephew was a prisoner in the hands of strangers. We can feel at this day very little interest in the names or procedure of those bands of ravagers with which the newly settled world was disturbed in Abram's day, except as they may be connected with his own eventful story. The circumstances of this case were briefly these: Palestine, like most of the countries of the world, was then cut up into innumerable little principalities, probably at first divided and regulated on the patriarchal principle. There were no extensive territories, no cunningly-woven policies; every little clan had its territory and its village, and every village had its king. In the vale of Jordan there were no less than five. These little governments had become already corrupted and enfeebled; and we find that fourteen years before this they had bartered their liberties for peace from the hands of the more rugged sons of some more northern spot. Who they were we know not, it matters not. Elam was the name of the patriarch of Persia, Elam is still a scriptural name of Persia, and we find that the principal of these invaders was a king of Elam, probably the chief of some inferior branch of that large family, who may have settled with his clan in the north-east of Syria; for in that direction we find the host retiring. Be this as it may, he had fourteen years before subjected the people of Jordan to his sway, and their rulers stood as tributary kings. During the pre-

ceding year they had thrown off the yoke. It was an effort worthy a far better people. But *they*, though claiming, and no doubt vaunting independence, had neither the skill nor the courage to maintain it. The king of Elam, with three confederates, among whom we recognize the ruler of the people on the plains of Babylon, came the ensuing year to chastise their temerity, and rolled over the plain of Jordan like a torrent. If we are to judge from the extent of country over which the invaders exercised authority, the people of Jordan could have been no match for them at best. But of their attempts to meet them very little is recorded. We know only the event. Their rulers fled, and perished in their flight; a part of the people betook them to the mountains; but the greater portion became the prey of their conquerors. They could no longer be trusted, they were carried into slavery. Cattle and all moveables, every thing was taken, and the delightful plain of Jordan was left a perfect desert. This was the news that broke in on Abram's quiet. All were fled or killed or taken captive. Lot too was in slavery; his family were slaves, and all his large possessions the prey of brutal spoilers.

It fired the spirit of our peaceful patriarch. He did not wait to ponder the odds between his slender means and that mighty combination. He did not consider the distance to which they must already have borne their acquisitions. He remembered only that Lot was his near kinsman, his only kinsman in that land of strangers; he remembered all the excellencies of his adopted child; he thought of his being a prisoner; and these thoughts decided him for an immediate pursuit.

We said his means were slender. They consisted sole-

ly of his household-servants and the keepers of his cattle. All men unused to the trade of war. Men who would be likely, if they thought at all, to think of the vast disparity between their slender and undisciplined ranks, and the hosts of so many kings whose trade was war. But they felt a reverence for their master's feelings; and reared in his family, nursed as his children, they were devoted to his will. Behold then our patriarch, that old and peaceful man, for the first time perhaps in his life, exchanging the implements of the shepherd for the weapons of the soldier; and leading forth his band, armed as he could supply them in the hurry of that hour, his little band of three hundred and eighteen servants, against the armies of four victorious kings. A long way he pursued them. He passed the northern limits of the plain of Sodom, he passed the borders of the sea of Genneserat, he passed the tributary streams of Jordan, he traced that river to its very head, and still the victorious armies were before him. In this long pursuit he had full leisure to think of all the dangers he was encountering for his kinsman; his spirit might well have fainted at the unequal conflict. He might have thought of Sarai left so far behind, and of the perils that would await her should he be unsuccessful. But Abram once roused had the spirit of a hero. His courage was cool, collected and unbending. The noblest feelings had dictated this pursuit, conscience approved it, the God of battles was full able to give success; and he never would give over till no hope remained. One hundred and fifty miles he followed them, and overtook them among the hills of Lebanon, near the Syrian borders. Secure in their numbers and in the distance they had gone, they looked for no such greeting. He wisely parted his little

company into three divisions, and then availed him of the darkness of the night when none could guess the number of assailants or distinguish friend from foe.

We need not dilate on the result of this attack. The terror would be great in proportion to their security, and the rout the more dreadful in proportion to their numbers. It was speedy, it was complete. The conquering army fled, they were pursued, they were slain; nor did the slaughter cease till the remnant had been chased full fifty miles to the very heart of Syria.

But again we must leave our patriarch, now returning triumphant from this field of blood. The great deliverance which his courage wrought, the disinterestedness and modesty which closed this scene of victory, deserve more marked attention than we could possibly allow to them in the conclusion of this exercise. On next Lord's day we hope to raise high our pæan to the victor. This morning we will leave him in his blood-stained robes.

We will just look one moment at that unhappy Lot. A wise Providence read him a lecture on his foolish choice, when he preferred the company of the men of Sodom, because their vale was fruitful. Little did it avail the unhappy Lot that pastures were abundant and his flocks most prosperous, when he saw them driven away to swell the wealth of spoilers, or bleeding beneath the knives of the ravenous soldiery. Bitter must have been the feelings of the better instructed Lot, when he thought how he had agreed to mingle with the corrupted men of Sodom that he might share the advantages of their delightful home, when he and they were led captive from that home, doomed to eat together the bitter bread of slavery—when he must still share their converse, share the horrors of their put-

ishment, though the prospect of the advantage which had invited this rash league was now snatched from him forever. This brief history does not indeed descant on the offence of Lot; it does not say that his calamity was the punishment of his offence. But it glances at the impropriety and dangers of that choice, when, after stating that he made his election of the plain of Jordan, it forthwith states so explicitly the characters of the people. "The men of Sodom were sinners before the Lord exceedingly,"—and Lot chose to associate with them for the advantage of their pastures. He endangered the better sentiments of his early life, he endangered the morals of his rising family, he threw them into a vortex of unparalleled wickedness, not because he hoped to enlighten by his instructions or to improve by his examples the people of the plain; but because they possessed a country watered and fruitful as the garden of the Lord. And it was fit that Providence should read him such a lecture on the just deserts of his immoral choice.

You need not be told that the nephew of our patriarch is only one among many who have thrown themselves headlong into the circles of vice, into vortices of folly, where all was temptation, corruption, pollution, for no better end than the more certain and speedy advancement of their fortunes. You need not be told that even less than this, that the dread of singularity or the love of distinction, have bound their thousands to the chariot-wheels of vice, and borne them far away from the temple and the altar, till habits and tastes and feelings have been new moulded; till the society of Sodom becomes the native element; till any thing seems preferable to the fellowship of heaven, so safe, so elevating, so peaceful and so pure. This

was the first, but it was not the only lesson the friend of Abram received on this important subject. We shall find him the loser a second time in Sodom, when it was a second time visited by desolating judgments. May we now remember the lesson it should teach us!—"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

SERMON XV.

BIOGRAPHY OF ABRAHAM.—(CONTINUED.)

“And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, (after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him,) at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king’s dale,” &c. Gen. xiv. 17—.

WERE we to name the particular in which more than in any other the world is apt to rank itself above the disciples of the Saviour, we should say it is in the native elevation of its sentiments and grandeur of its view.. And yet nothing is more demonstrable than the vast superiority which christianity may boast in the facilities she possesses for moulding the feelings and enlarging the conceptions of the human race. The objects with which her disciples are familiar are of the most stupendous order. The God of immensity is always in her eye: the regions she explores are those of immortality: the destinies she unfolds are lofty as the heavens, deep as hell, lasting as eternity: the principles she inculcates, the standard she sets up, are pure and perfect as spirits of heaven can know. How comes it then to pass that christian views and conceptions can be otherwise than lofty? How can degraded sentiment and feeling spring from such alliance.

There are two principal causes, my brethren, of this un-

Just imputation. It is seldom that christians act a conspicuous part in any of those transactions which excite the deepest interest or the fondest admiration in the world. "It is from high life high characters are drawn;" and he who treads the heights of moral grandeur will move unrecognized, if not unseen, unless the splendor of accompanying circumstances attracts the general gaze. We need not say to you that a thousand things combine to deprive the mass of christians of these incidental advantages. As humble men they move in humble circumstances, and their noblest deeds are like the widow's mite.

There is a second reason of peculiar force. The unbending rigor of eternal righteousness, and of course the stern integrity of those who shape their conduct by that rule, will doubly subject them to the operation of that custom, "men's evil deeds we grave in brass: their good we write on water." It is the revenge which the accusing conscience takes on those whose customary deeds reprove it. And who under heaven may hope the meed of justice when borne down by such a rule! Ours is a world of weakness and of sin. The noblest spirit, the purest bosom, do not always dictate a high and even course: the intellect that marches and moves among the stars, with a step as firm, with a port as commanding as archangels know to practice; that intellect may have its moments when it cannot rise, but trips and falters like the veriest childhood. You have then but to forget the ten thousand deeds of nobleness; you have but to overlook that amazing march of mind which often strained your utmost faculties to follow its ascent when it stretched its broad pinions like an eagle toward the sun—you have but to commit this record to the waters; and fix all your attention on those unhappy mo-

ments which exhibits your hero sluiced of all his strength, shorn of all his beams—which exhibit him deprived of all his christian energies; and then measure by this sample the operation of his principles on the heart and understanding.

We have seen that our patriarch, the father of the faithful, had his peculiar moments when weak as other men; and we know how a temper malignant as unjust may paint with outline strong and colouring so vivid the melancholly story of Abram's cowardice and Abram's unbelief, till we forget in the rehearsal of a patriarch's feelings the many noble qualities that embalm his memory; forget the lofty daring which precipitated destruction on invading armies, and the strong but quiet confidence that gave direction to his destiny and tranquillity to his life. But though others may forget them so will not we. We mark his errors, for we would be cautioned by them; and in the moments of our bitterness for that we too have fallen, it is consolatory to reflect that we are not single in abasement. But we will mark his errors in connexion with his excellencies, that our courage may revive and our energies be marshalled when we see that men have mounted from the lowest depths, and moved and triumphed as though they had never fallen. Let others if they will record our goodness on the water. Let others take note of transient imbecility; we will remember also the years of the right hand of the Most High, we will remember then to arise like those whom he has aided.

We left our patriarch when last we traced his footsteps, returning from the slaughter of the invading armies. The slaughter was immense, the triumph complete as it was glorious. All the captives were freed from the miseries

of their bondage; Lot and his family had the double satisfaction of hailing at once a deliverer and a friend; and he, the chief of these desolating hosts, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, was numbered among the slain. And here for the most part terminates the record of those magnanimous efforts to which the world is accustomed to adjudge the meed of glory. Your heroes who have triumphed amid the horrors of the battle are generally seen to put the finish to their fame ere they have retired from the field of their victories, or changed the garments stiffened and stained with blood. But the heroism of Abram was the least conspicuous of his virtues. His magnanimity is not summed up in putting all to the hazard that he might free his relative. No doubt there were many in that little band who with inferior motive had done bravely as himself. It is in the milder lustre of his moderation and modesty that we scan his highest praise.

At the valley of Shaveh, about forty miles from Sodom, he was met by the kings of Sodom and of Salem. The king of Sodom was one of those brave patriots who in flight had found their safety. A slime pit had concealed him in the hour of danger. Abram now returning with his released captives might well be hailed with gladness by a man whom he had saved from the mortification of being a king without a people. Such a man however merits nothing of our notice. He occupies no space in this inspired record. But he was accompanied by another person whose character and station equally claim our attention. He was a prince in Canaan, and at the same time a priest of the Most High God. Actuated at once by the spirit of a patriot and christian, we find him first pour forth acknowledgments to the God of battles who had accomplished this

great work, and then heap blessings on the head of Abram, whose magnanimity and prowess had led him to attempt it under protection of that Providence which they both acknowledged.

Melchizedec furnishes one among the many instances which go to prove that in this bad world of ours piety and christian intelligence may be a much more common thing than even the most charitable are apt to suppose. Who would have expected in this land of Canaanites, where the pollutions of Sodom offend the eye continually, where the ear is stunned with the blasphemies of Gomorrah, who would have expected when reading Abram's story that any sanctity or any light were to be found in Canaan, except that which may be supposed to be cherished in the circle that bowed with our patriarch around his many altars. But lo! at once, after Abram had spent so many years in Canaan, unconnected it would seem with any worshipper of the Most High, lo! at once, when returning from his victories, the first that hails him is a man of God; at once a prince in Canaan and a priest of the Most High. And he does not barely meet him with warm congratulations; as the minister of God he invokes blessings on the hero; as a prince and patriot he flings wide his stores and brings forth refreshment for the band who had behaved themselves so nobly. It is the first and the last that we hear of this Melchizedec, except in those allusions to his character and standing which present him as a type of the Saviour of the world, at once the King and great High Priest in Zion. The fact that he only gleamed like the sudden flash of lightning that shews itself but for a moment and then leaves the world to darkness, in connection with these allusions of prophets and apostles, has thrown around the

character of this Melchizedec a grandeur and awe to which it is not entitled. The psalmist had said that Messiah should be a Priest after the order of Melchizedec, and the apostle Paul seizes on this prophecy to prove to the Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was such a priest. He was without father and without mother. For it is manifest, says he, that our Lord sprang from Judah, of whom Moses spake nothing as concerning the priesthood. From this it has been inferred that Melchizedec was really a being without parentage; that he was an angel, or the Holy Spirit, or Jesus Christ himself. We will not detain you with the formal refutation of these many idle speculations. It is sufficient to say they are all unauthorized; and that they are unnecessary to the interpretation of the apostle's language. Paul says that Jesus was without father and without mother as Melchizedec was. And he gives this proof of it; for it is manifest that our Lord sprang from Judah." Now Judah had no title to the priesthood. No man but a Levite could be a priest in Israel. In fact the line was kept so unmixed that it was in all cases requisite that the mother as well as father should be of the tribe of Levi. A marriage with the females of another tribe destroyed forever the title to the priesthood. This was the Mosaic order. But Melchizedec was not of the tribe of Levi; neither his father nor mother were of the house Aaron: he lived long before their day. Now, said the prophecy, Messiah shall be such a priest. Now, says the apostle, Jesus is such a priest. He is of Judah's tribe; he inherits his office neither from father nor mother; as concerning the priesthood he is without father and without mother; he stands alone like Melchizedec king of Salem; he inherits not his office from a line of priests; to a line of priests he never will transmit it.

Melchizedec then was a man, a common man, but a great and good and patriotic man, the first to hail the deliver of his country.

And now mark how bows the spirit of our exalted patriarch as he bends to receive the blessing from this priest of God. Abram is great, but there is a greater than he; to the God of battles he owes his distinguished victory, and he will not exalt himself against the hand that raised him up. Behold the fruits of true magnanimity! behold the course that sound intelligence dictates. That mind is weak and little which prosperity so intoxicates that it spurns subjection to the Great Supreme:—that spirit is imbecile as well as impious that loses sight, amid the splendor of its own attainments, of the intelligence and grandeur that exalt the throne of God. It is a mistaken dignity that cannot stoop here where all things owe subjection; it is puerile vanity that exalts itself here where all should be humility and docility and reverence. Shew me that warrior who when he has earned his laurels will bow them to the dust at the foot of Messiah's cross; shew me that intelligence which when it has scanned creation through, sees him who sits at the head of this creation, and bends with reverence to hear his deep instruction: shew me in one word the person who has strength to sustain his weight of honours and yet reverence and fear his God, and I will shew you then a hero whose worth has many witnesses, less equivocal and more lasting than courage and coolness in the battle's shock. Many are the men who are courageous as our patriarch; but few can wear their laurels with such a modest mien. The tythes which Abram gave of the spoils he had redeemed it was his right to give. The custom of those rude ages had no respect in war to pri-

vate property. The persons as well as property of the vanquished became alike the victor's right. Of course when our patriarch overcame the spoiler, all the fruits of the victory were his own. And in conformity with a custom which had obtained from early times, and was continued down to the end of the Old Testament dispensation, a tenth of the property as a seventh of the time was devoted exclusively to religious uses, in formal acknowledgment that to God men owed their all. It was for the most part immaterial to what particular use this tenth was devoted. Sometimes it was employed in the service of the altar; sometimes the possessor sold it and with the money made purchase of such things in Jerusalem as pleased his taste or fancy. This was a point of inferior consideration. The main thing was that it should be withdrawn from common uses on the principle we have named. According to the custom of the times our patriarch was now the owner of all the spoil. He therefore made his acknowledgments in the usual way. But it was all that he would use. When the king of Sodom bade him take the residue to himself, he magnanimously refused to touch the smallest article. There were three men who had accompanied him, natives of the country; let them, said Abram, take if they will their portion. But not a thread, not a shoe-latchet shall ever fall to me. No man shall have it in his power to say I have made Abram rich. It was right in the patriarch not to interfere with that portion of the spoil which custom set apart as due to God the giver. It was not his to merge the rights of others, or to make his own disinterestedness a rule to shape the course of other men. Justice demanded that he should not tax their magnanimity. But no man's suggestion should rob him of his own. And here a

gain we have an example of that true gallantry of spirit, which shapes its feelings and its course without that tame subjection to custom or to law, which all but master spirits own in every case. We have seen men who would be generous when the world had stamped a deed with the name of generosity; men who would act nobly when noble acting was the order of the day; but who never knew to soar above the common standard in things and circumstances where custom had always sanctioned a low and selfish course. We love those gallant and independent spirits who are a law only to themselves, whose keen discernment and delicate perception will always incline them to the path of magnanimity whether custom has decked it with epithets of greatness or branded it with names of imprudence and folly. We love the lofty spirit that is magnanimous from impulse and not because its vanity seeks the praise of magnanimity; we love the noble soul whose magnanimity plays as freely when coupled with loss and censure as when followed with loud applauses. We love such magnanimity as that of Abram, which will guard most sacredly the smallest rights of others, while prodigal—beyond all example prodigal of his own. This is the highmindedness of our bible worthies. God of Abram, may it be all our own!

But we cease our encomium on the spirit of the patriarch. We admire it, we love it, we would imitate it through life; but we know there are excellencies more exalted though less splendid, and there are enjoyments far more solid and incomparably more durable than any that can arise from performing acts of virtue in the sight of men. Come with me now—we will detain you but a moment—come with me home to the tents of Abram on the

plain of Mamre, and note the private occupations of this highminded man.—“The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: *I am* thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.” Come ye who think it glory to court the applause of the unstable multitude, who covet a popularity that like the goard of Jonah grows up in a night and withers in a night! Come ye who know no happiness so exalted as to mingle in the circles of the great ones of this world, and who feel honoured, who feel blessed, exalted, transported, if the majesty of fading flesh bend upon you once the eye of kindness! Come see the guest of Abram! Come hear his salutation. He said it in the lowly tent of Abram, he often says it in the cottage of the lowly, far oftener we fear than in the rooms of state—“I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.” We will not degrade by our feeble comments such a salutation. We will not weaken your impressions of that state in which the majesty of heaven displays his familiar presence, and plants himself the shield of those who worship him and serve him. If any man obey his voice he will know what tongues of mortals cannot speak, and he will prize the honour that cometh down from God.

It was a fit occasion for our venerable patriot to dwell upon the sorrows that preyed upon his heart, and to bring up the disappointments that had astonished and oppressed him. He had been taught to consider Palestine as the land of his posterity; and now after many years had been spent in wandering, and he and Sarah were fast hastening to the tomb, he was far as ever, farther than ever to all appearance, from the fulfilment of his wishes; and he seizes this first favourable moment to urge his petition home. “Lord God,” said he, “what wilt thou give me, seeing I go

childless and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus." "Behold thou hast given me no seed; and lo! one born in my house is my heir." We pass by the assurance that notwithstanding the unpromising aspect of the present moment, notwithstanding the disappointments by which his heart had been already torn, all should at last be well—all should be fulfilled according to his wish. We pass by the magnificent illustration of this promise: Number if thou canst the stars of heaven; so shall thy seed be. We pass by the consolations and the honours of his faith: "He believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness." And we fix your eye at the conclusion of this exercise on the grand solemnities of the sacred rite that followed. Abram in obedience to the Divine commandment prepared a solemn sacrifice. An heifer, a goat and a ram of three years old, together with a couple of fowls, were prepared and laid in order. The beasts were divided and the portions formed two rows with an interval between through which the symbols of the Divinity might pass; a fit admonition that it is only through the medium of that Saviour whose sufferings and death these sacrifices shewed forth, the presence of the Eternal can pass at all in mercy before sinful men. He does not cast us forever from his sight; he even comes and visits us. But he comes only to the places where Messiah's blood has come; he is to be seen alone at the altar on the sacrifice. There we must meet him, by that he passes to us, by that we pass to him. A long time Abram waited. To him it was an eventful day, for God had ordained this solemn preparation to confirm to our patriarch by a new and strange assurance the promise in which he trusted. At length just as the sun was sinking from his view the vision,

came upon him. All his senses were locked up, and every thing around him was excluded from sight and thought except that sacrifice which he had laid in order. That was still before him as completely as if he had been in the fullest exercise of all his senses. The voice of God was heard, but not through the medium of his bodily organs; the promise of Canaan was renewed and amplified; but it was accompanied with a statement of the bondage and oppression which Israel should first endure in Egypt. Then came the symbol of the Almighty's presence; a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed through between the pieces. The thing was real, and Abram really saw it; though the ordinary avenues of sense were locked. Had others been present, but not thus wrapt in vision, the address of the Almighty and the response of Abram had passed unknown to them. That smoking furnace and that burning lamp had not displayed their fires. Abram was wrapt from human sense and feeling; he saw as spirits see, and felt as spirits feel, when he met with the Master of the world of spirits. We will not detain you with the conclusion of this scene. Suffice it to say he had witnessed a sight which no material eye can see; and while wrapt in vision he received anew his Maker's promise of that land. Then he awoke as from a common slumber; the burning lamp, the smoking furnace had disappeared together; all was dark and cold around him; but all was light and joy and peace within.

My brethren, we have noted for you this interesting scene, because it is one in which we meet with much that should instruct and interest us all. We began to exist and to perceive and think while wrapt in these material organs. And we cannot separate our ideas of sensation, or

perception, or even thought, from these our tabernacles of clay. And yet it is the spirit and not this clay that sees and thinks and feels. This clay like a thick and cumbersome veil serves to conceal our spirits from one another, from the world of spirits, and even from ourselves.

But this is all it does, and were it to-day in your power to cast aside that veil, what sights at once would burst upon your vision. We have not to travel high as heaven, we need not soar beyond the confines of this solar system, or above the furthest limits of all the stars of God, to enter the world in which intelligent spirits dwell. Cast off that veil, God the Spirit is every where, and at once in a moment you see him as he is; "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."—Cast off that veil and a world O how populous is unfolded to the sight; "millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth;" and earthly obstructions which limit our gross vision, can present no obstacle to immaterial mind. Cast off that veil and you feel that you are still the same, your sensations and perceptions, your principles and passions do not thereby alter. Abram, while in vision he talked with his Creator, was conscious of no change in aught that related to personal identity, to his principles or feelings. Go then from this house, but go bearing in your mind how nearly you are treading on the borders of that world where all is spirit, and all is everlasting. Go thinking how important now to form such friendships as death will only cement, and to cherish such habits as will meet appropriate objects in that world of spirits. And you whose trembling nerves or hoary heads foretell that you very soon must pass the limits of that world; and you who sit like patience on a monument, and let concealment like a worm in the bud prey on

a cheek far lovelier than damask,—prepare to exchange with joy and not with grief this mortal scene for scenes of immortality, Friends and brethren, soon may we meet there; and while we look with veneration on this father of the faithful already in that world from which this thin partition separates us, may we meet with looks more kindly and with feelings more intense, we who have toiled and sometimes wept together, we who have loved and prayed for one another, may we soon meet with feelings pure and rapturous, in our Father's presence, our eternal home.

SERMON XVI.

BIOGRAPHY OF ABRAHAM.—(CONTINUED.)

*“Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, bare him no children,” &c.
Gen. xvi. 1—.*

“IN my prosperity I said, my mountain stands strong, I shall never be moved. Thou didst hide thy face and I was troubled.” It were well, my brethren, if the psalmist of Israel had been the only person who was ever compelled to make this melancholy and humiliating reflection. But generation may confess it to generation, that in this as in a variety of other respects, heart answers to heart and experience to experience, as in water face to face. There is probably nothing about which we hear and experience so much and yet learn so very little, as about the instability and deceitfulness of the human heart. When fired by the charms of novelty or operated on by any other cause that excites a strong, but momentary feeling, we are apt to mistake the impulse of that feeling for the dictate of sober judgment and well regulated principle, and therefore calculate with certainty that the views we now cherish and good resolutions we form will be lasting as our being. And yet who has not felt it a thousand times that the moment these strong feelings begin to subside our perceptions of truth and excellence become less vivid, we no longer obey

the dictates of the sober judgment, and those moral principles which we had deemed so pure, so commanding, so impregnable, those principles give way before the first attack that enlists our feelings against the cause of uprightness.

There is but the one way, my brethren, known to this universe, in which intelligent beings can maintain under every circumstance the glory of their uprightness. It is by making the known will of the Supreme Intelligence the reason of our conduct, and by loving him so entirely and trusting him so implicitly that we can only find and wish for happiness in abiding by his will. You know that the sacrifices made by ardent love are never painful sacrifices; and that the labours prompted and stimulated by love are always pleasant labours.

But in our world of sin, where so many things combine to obscure our views of the Divinity, where our own depravity intercepts to such a degree the communications of his goodness, and where unhallowed passion and the powerful influence of example equally tend to alienate our regards from God, you are never to expect that pure and perfect excellence that blesses those whom sin has never tainted. There often may be moments when our views of eternal things are peculiarly lucid and extensive, when the heart is melted by the sense of the Divine goodness and feels most deeply the obligations of his love, when we are lifted high in our hopes of eternal happiness, and feel disposed to confide all things implicitly to his management whose ways we know are marked with goodness and wisdom. In moments like this, we move in a region elevated far above our narrow views and selfish passions: we see all things in the relations in which they really stand to us and to one

another; we see them as God sees them, in the light of truth;—and then we are apt to think that we can never more revert to the crooked ways of error, never more stoop to the base servitude of passion, never more depart from our confidence in God: we say, “our mountain stands strong, we never can be moved.”—But our vivid perceptions fade, and our steps begin to falter; the darkness of our minds abates our confidence in God, intercourse with the world gives birth to new desires, the force of example lends vigour to the passions,—God hides his face and we are troubled.

The history of our psalmist is the history of every christian. Because every christian is a sinner to be redeemed by grace; and the redemption of his nature being only perfected in part, he has neither the clear perceptions nor the strong and steady feelings that sustain the upright in an even course. The story of his redemption is a story of grace abounding; a history of God’s patience ten thousand times tested; a history of his pity ten thousand times displayed; a history of his power ten thousand times exerted; and all to confirm to us this single simple truth, that all our own goodness is like the morning cloud, and that if ever we attain to the perfection of our being, the work from first to last must be salvation by his grace.

You saw our patriarch on last Lord’s day in all the purity of his exalted piety, and in all the elevation of a great and lofty spirit. You saw a man to whose service kings stood debtors, and who scorned a recompense at the hand of kings; you saw him stooping lowly with his fresh cropped laurels and owning all subjection to the God of battles; you saw that God of battles like a father and a friend come down to the lowly dwelling of the patriarch, and tell him

of future plans of glory and of good, which centuries alone would be sufficient to unfold; you saw how he was at pains to provide for his frail friend new and strange assurance that his hope should not miscarry; you saw the spirit of this man of God wrapt for a while from mortal sense and sight, while the visions of God were made plain to his perceptions, and the voice that never deceives was made distinctly audible. You knew well the feelings of the highly favored Abram as the symbols of God's presence passed before him; it was then your own conviction that had you stood in Abram's stead, had you seen the smoking furnace and the burning lamp, and heard distinctly that voice of the Almighty, you would have rested most securely in the promise and the pledge, and no more considered delay as the trial of your patience.

So thought Abram when the vision of God had left him. So no doubt for months he rested in contentment. But the promise was to him a matter of tender interest; to Sarai it was a matter of high and ardent hope. The man who had exhibited such a gallant spirit, when his little band hung on the rear of the invading armies, and when his soul spurned reward in the vale of Shaveh; a man of such a high and uncontaminated mind would of course be communicative to the woman of his choice about all in which their hearts and their interests were so blended. For take this as a rule that knows of no exception, a pure and elevated mind, is always the most feeling, and always the most faithful in every thing connected with our social relations. Even the affection and heroism of his little band of servants proclaim the mild and fatherly dominion of their gallant master; the wife and the children, the dependant or the friend, will meet with a consideration at

once respectful, tender and unfailing from the mind that cannot stoop in any situation to act the unworthy or unfeeling part. And there too is the strength of friendship unimpaired, and there the fires of love will ever glow; while the little, fluttering, domineering, changeling, intoxicated one moment with a small superiority, and blown about the next with a puff of vanity, has neither self-command nor self-respect sufficient to act a part consistent with the relations he sustains; to the mighty he is a sycophant, to the weak a tyrant; among the wise a mere tyro, among the ignorant a Solomon; and a changeling among all.—The elevation of our patriarch's sentiments kept pace with the honors that bloomed upon his brow, kept pace with the dignity to which his character was advanced in being wrapt in the solemnities of the visions of God. Still he was a kind and condescending master; and the hero of the age, the friend of the Almighty, the father of the faithful, still breathed into the ear of his Sarai the thoughts of his heart, still shared with her his solicitude and cares; and that in an age when woman was degraded from a companion and a friend to a state the most abject.

How strong and how tender was this mutual solicitude, and how frequent and free their interchange of thought, appears from the device suggested by Sarai. They had been now above ten years in Palestine; for ten long years they had hoped and looked for that promised son, the founder of their race, and still were disappointed. The late renewal of the promise in terms so magnificent and with solemnities so august, while it re-assured their minds that their hope should one day be crowned, within no long while excited greater impatience to witness the accomplishment. It was this that prompted Sarai at length to make a proposal which under the guidance of well regula-

ted feelings she never could have brooked. Sarai had a favorite handmaid; she was an Egyptian, and no doubt one of those that Abram had acquired when he increased his wealth and tarnished his fame in that unhappy trip to Egypt. Hagar the Egyptian should have ever stood as a memorial of their former sin and shame to this adventurous couple. Hagar the Egyptian ought ever to have reminded them how they were taught in Egypt that nothing is acquired by distrust in God but disappointment and disgrace. Hagar the Egyptian ought ever to have taught them that an attempt at forestalling the intents of Providence by ways of our devising can end only in our hurt. For Hagar was a memorial of that unhappy journey. They had in all probability acquired her there, and she was a witness to the dishonour with which they had been thence dismissed. Yet this very Hagar did Sarai herself point out in a second attempt to forestal the plans of Providence, and to accomplish in her own way what Almighty God stood pledged to accomplish at length in his.—She, you will recollect, never had been mentioned as the mother of that son who was to lay the foundation of the family honors. She at last concluded that she was not to be a mother. And yet she was eager to see the hope accomplished; she was willing to share with another the honor and the care of training up the heir of so many precious promises. Let then the mother of that heir be her own handmaid. Thus as the mistress of Hagar and the wife of Abram she should still have a sort of double property in the son so much desired: she thought—she felt as if though not his mother, she could hail him as her son. Thus in her folly Sarai reasoned; ignorant that she was sowing thorns which should one day rankle in her bosom, and thoughtless of the purity of high heaven's laws.

Full of her plan she proposed it to Abram, and Abram, we need not tell you, speedily acceded to it. Let us not however, leave this unhappy woman under all the obloquy which in modern circumstances would attach to such a deed. Far be it from us to say her fault was small. Far be it from us to "diminish aught" that should teach you to abhor it. But then be it remembered that in those eastern countries, and in that early age, poligamy was common; and custom so sanctions crime or teaches us to forget it, that the offence against the laws of God would weigh but little, or might not have weighed at all in the mind of Sarai. Apart from this we see much to pity as well as much to censure. Attached as Sarai doubtless was to Abram, it argued no little self-denial, indeed no little magnanimity, in her to consent, that an event so desirable might be accomplished, to share with another the affections of Abram. We speak the language of nature and of all the world, when we say that the spirit of love is of all others the most monopolizing, and that the affection which can be content with the return of half the heart, must be a poor, a wretched thing. Viewed in all its circumstances, Sarai was making a sacrifice of her peace in no contemptible degree; she was making a willing sacrifice of an honor of all earthly honors the dearest to her heart—she was giving away to a stranger and an inferior the right of becoming progenitor to that great and glorious line, which for a long time she had hoped would have hailed her as their mother. We know not what may have been the conflicts of her bosom, we know not what may have been the suggestions of her heart, before she was brought to tender such a sacrifice; but in this voluntary resignation of her honors, in this painful surrender of her rights, that her husband

might be happy in the accomplishment of his great wish, we cannot but mark a degree of tenderness and humility and magnanimity that, in despite of her error and illy-governed zeal, so far does honor to the wife of Abram.

But God Almighty promises no honors to the violation of his law. No one may do evil in the hope that good may come. And if in contempt of the arrangements of heaven we aim at the accomplishment of any of our wishes, not only shall we be grasping at forbidden fruit, but at fruit that, like the fabled apples which grew by the lake of Sodom, will fill the mouth when tasted with salt and bitter ashes.

So Sarai found. No sooner had this woman who from a slave had been raised to something like an equality with her mistress, no sooner did Hagar begin to entertain the hope that she was to be the mother of Abram's glorious line, than the very woman whose partiality had raised her, became contemptible in her eyes; and she began to assume airs of superiority to her mistress.

It is one, and it is not the smallest of the curses of slavery, that it degrades the feelings and almost annihilates the principles of those who are its subjects. A little mind will always triumph in a fancied superiority, and a person without principles will as readily triumph over those by whose aid they have arisen as over any others. The triumph of Hagar was that of a base born slave, and it was precisely such as might have been looked for under such circumstances. It was the triumph of ignorance, ingratitude and baseness, over the woman who had unwisely, we must add sinfully, but at the same time in a spirit of no ordinary magnanimity, sacrificed much and hazarded a great deal more, we will not say for her sake, but nevertheless for her advantage.

It is not strange that Sarai should have resented promptly and indignantly such ungrateful conduct. The loftiness of her spirit, and the generous but mistaken policy she had adopted in the case, would lead us to expect some such burst of passion. The noblest minds are always the most sensitive; and none will so promptly resent an ungenerous outrage as those who are least capable of committing it. For, independently of the ardor of such minds, independently of all selfish considerations, there is a feeling quick and haughty that will spurn at baseness in whatever form it shews itself, while it can bear with patience, and even with tranquility, wrongs of another description a thousand times as great.

This, however, was an evil of Sarai's own procuring, and she certainly deserved it all. She who in Egypt had already learned the danger of attempting even lawful things in an unlawful way, she who had been made to see her wisdom to be folly when attempting to secure in her way what Providence had undertaken to provide for in its own, she should never have furnished to this Egyptian woman an occasion of teaching her that lesson a second time—a lesson at once so humiliating and so painful. But it is thus that our self-will, our imagined wisdom, and our distrust of Providence, perpetually are bringing us into dangers and troubles. It is in fact very rare that any one suffers for adhering to their duty. It is equally rare that they escape suffering who desert the plain and forward track of duty either to avoid difficulties or to secure advantages. It is in their own devices that cunning men are caught, it is into the pit themselves had digged designing men are tumbled, it is by the castles of their own folly that the self-willed are crushed. This is the general plan of

Providence; out of our sin he elicits punishment, and our own crooked ways conduct us to destruction.

Sarai had no one but herself to blame. But nevertheless, in the style of our first father when he impiously accused his Maker, she lays on Abram the burden of her wrong. We would by no means insinuate that Abram was not to blame. With greater light than Sarai may be supposed to have enjoyed, he was equally in fault. But then she who was the instigator had no right to charge him. Nevertheless, it was just in the dispensations of Providence, that he who had acted wrongly should have his feelings wounded by the imputation of this wrong. It was just and wise that they who had conspired to increase their domestic comfort by forbidden means, should have their wishes thwarted and their comfort banished by domestic jars. And it was right that Hagar, who had triumphed so unworthily, should reap the consequence of her ingratitude and vanity. Abram committed her entirely to Sarai's management; and Sarai dealt so hardly with her that she betook herself to flight. The next that we hear of her, she is alone in the wilderness. But into that wilderness we will not follow her now. We will barely note, and note for our own instruction, the sum of this sad story.

We find that this device of Sarai, for hastening the accomplishment of the promise so long looked for, ended not only in the bitterest disappointment, but in jealousies and strife and cruelty. A son indeed was born, but it was not the child of promise. And never yet did God give grounds to any mortal of high and holy hope, which he meant to fulfill by other than high and holy means. And never yet did man by any hotbed process attempt to accomplish even just and lawful wishes, in which he has not retarded what

he was anxious to promote. Nor were domestic miseries the sole consequence of this rash and lawless undertaking. Just heaven, to punish the impatience and self-will of this unhappy pair, retarded still longer the fulfillment of their hopes. Year rolled on after year, and still the promise came not. Abram was consoled with no more visitations of the Father of his mercies; no messenger from heaven repeated the loved assurance; year passed after year, and there was none to tell how long. Thus fourteen years rolled round, and this couple, now receding far into the darkness of old age, were left more destitute and comfortless than ever. In this darkness and perplexity they well deserved to live; and there we will for the present leave them.

We will only say to you who now inherit Abram's faith, beware how you venture to imitate Abram's follies. It is a great mistake to imagine that even the most favored followers of the Saviour will escape entirely the consequences of their misdeeds, because infinite mercy pardons them. Mercy may pardon, but most indubitably holiness will mark them. You will hereafter see that this rule is universal; you will learn from the history of all the patriarchs that whenever they have wandered, they have been made to pay the penalty of their unworthiness. And it is right that it should be so. It is right that all men should feel, and that the universe should know, that no creature can be gainer that sets up its own wisdom against the wisdom of its Maker, or attempts to overleap the boundaries he prescribes. It is right that men should find that the ways of wisdom are the only ways of pleasantness, and the paths of uprightness the only paths of peace. Fellow sinners, you may try it when you will: but they who seek their happiness without regard to the Divine constitutions,

must attempt to be happy in despite of God. Now, hast thou an arm that can cope with the Almighty? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?—If not, then take a lesson from the patriarch Abram. Know that it is wisdom to wait patiently on God, to attempt a lawful purpose by none but lawful means, and to cherish hope so high and holy by an high and holy course.—*Amen.*

SERMON XVII.

BIOGRAPHY OF ABRAHAM.—(CONTINUED.)

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: walk before me, and be thou perfect,” &c.

Gen. xvii. 1—.

“DEEP calleth unto deep. All thy billows and thy waves pass over me.” It was not only in the land of Israel, it was not only by the Jewish prince and prophet that the sad accumulation of trouble upon trouble, woe upon woe, has been experienced and lamented. We have ourselves a proverb: “afflictions seldom come single;”—and we presume there are few among you who have not been compelled in your time to confess, or at least to feel, that it is true. This accumulation of sorrow in the dispensations of God, is as wise and merciful as it is common. It arises out of two important and very obvious considerations: the design of Providence in visiting us with sorrow, and the tempers with which we are prone to regard such dispensations. Sometimes distress is inflicted exclusively as a punishment to the party offending, and as a warning to others to beware how they offend. In such cases it is of course judgment without mercy; it prostrates, it crushes, it marks its hapless object as with the seal of reprobation.

Such a visitation furnishes no answer to our inquiries. But in general such visitations have a different object. They are designed to warn and to amend the person visited. And were we of a temper at all times disposed to regard the hand of God, and to amend our ways at the very first suggestion, then doubtless afflictions would come single. One stroke would be sufficient to answer every purpose, and where mercy had amended mercy would forgive. But men are not apt to be so speedily convinced or humbled. Disappointment must ordinarily follow disappointment, pang succeed to pang, till Almighty Providence compel a recognition of his hand, and misery have taught them that it is vain to contend with him. Deep, then, calls to deep, and wave rolls after wave, because the stubborn and stupid mind of man will seldom take advantage of a single admonition.

Our patriarch had the tempers common to our kind, and he mourned the common lot. We saw on last Lord's day the tribulations that resulted from an attempt to compass his wishes in an unwarrantable way. We read you from that scroll that flutters high in heaven, lamentation and anguish and woe—"tribulation and wrath upon every soul of man that doeth evil;"—that doeth it "that good may come." But it was not enough that bitter disappointment should flow from this device: it was not enough that the once peaceful tent of Abram should become the joyless scene of crimination and strife: it was not enough that jealousy should lour and malignity should scowl in faces once tranquil and smiling as the summer sea. All this and much more than this our patriarch had to suffer. For that very device which banished confidence and calmness from the tent of Abram, removed farther than ever the fulfill-

ment of his wishes. God who had given him promise of that son, God who had visited him so frequently and familiarly, the God of his mercies disappeared at the same time with his domestic peace, and for fourteen years longer Abram pined in joyless expectation. He had not only to mourn the hope still unfulfilled, he had to mourn the displeasure of him who gave that hope. No more visions of God threw their lights upon futurity—no messenger from on high repeated the loved assurance—year followed year, and there was none to tell how long: Abram and Sarai verged fast toward decrepitude; and for fourteen long years they seemed to be forgotten, and as if about to sink into the tomb, unvisited and unblessed.

Far be it from us to portray the melancholy of those leaden years about which our history is silent. But far be it from you, far be it from us all, to disregard the lesson which those dull years may teach us.

Still, however, we find, as is usual in the dispensations of the Most High, mercy rejoices over judgment. Abram, though chastened, is not forsaken; the promise, though delayed, is not abrogated. The mind so long and deeply humbled by the remembrance of an offence against which God had written so many bitter things, was brought at length to that frame of meekness and patience that fitted it for a renewal of the long lost intercourse. Accordingly he who had bowed sorrowing before his Maker's altar from the unhappy day in which he listened to the rash advice of Sarai, was at last cheered, when on the verge of his hundredth year, with another manifestation of the Almighty presence.

We need not say to you that this renewal of an intercourse so long suspended, must have filled the bosom of

the patriarch with strong and strange sensations. You will not deem it strange that Abram fell on his face, in humiliation the most abject, and in extacy unutterable, when his ears were again saluted with the welcome sound "I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect." Abram had been often prostrate in lowly adoration; he had often blessed the condescension of his Maker, when his names of goodness and purposes of kindness were uttered in his audience. But in no case do we meet the record of emotions so tumultuous as those which rushed into the bosom of our patriarch on this unlooked-for visit. Not when a hapless idolator in Chaldea he first received the intimation of his future greatness; not when he had first passed into the land of Canaan, and heard the glad voice of his Almighty friend among idolators and strangers; not when wrapped in the visions of God, he was awed before the symbols of the Almighty's presence, the smoking furnace and the burning lamp. All such visitations were calculated to impress the spirit of our patriarch with feelings of gratitude, veneration and security. But nothing under heaven comes home so fully to the human heart, nothing that is stupendous, nothing that is pleasing, nothing that is soothing, nothing that is awful, so works upon the feelings, as the returning kindness of those whom once we loved, and who, after years of painful separation and of desolated feelings, convince us that they never had divorced us from their hearts. All that ever elicited the gratitude of Abram, or gave strength and consistency to confidence and hope, never had so wrought upon the feelings of our patriarch, as did that single sentence of his returning friend which brought him prostrate on his face.

We can only sketch to you the more important particu-

lars connected with this new communication. You note among the first, the confirmation of a remark we sometime since made to you in relation to the scheme of prophecy. It was this, that the whole of the scriptural prophecies constitute one system or scheme of prediction, in which every successive revelation sheds additional light without materially extending the field of view: precisely as the sun, when he first begins in the morning to approach our horizon, sheds a faint twilight that discovers the field and forest and the distant outline of the mountain-top—discovers all in their full dimensions; yet but dimly and partially. Additional light imparts additional distinctness, and every successive minute, from the first dawn of light, the grey-ness of the morning, the rudiness of sunrise, up to the yellow lustre of the risen day, multiplies the objects in your field of vision, and adds to their distinctness, without enlarging the general field of view. The scheme of prophecy is like this augmenting light; every new communication adds something to the distinctness and particularity of our views.

In the present instance we discover no new purpose; but that original purpose is more accurately defined. The long expected son is again promised to our patriarch; the honour of becoming a father to many nations is again confirmed; and it is confirmed with this additional assurance, that the covenant of his mercy so often renewed with Abram should be continued with his seed; and that they should inherit the blessings so long promised, not merely in right of the covenant made with Abram, but that covenant should be renewed and established with themselves. "I will establish it in their generations for an everlasting covenant"—"I will give them the land of Canaan for an

everlasting possession—and I will be their God.” Before this annunciation the wealth of Canaan, and the mere patriarchal honours, dwindled into insignificance. Life—eternal life, the inheritance most dear to the father of the faithful, is guaranteed to his descendants. On the altar of Jehovah their oblations shall also flame, in the presence of Jehovah their hearts shall also bow; and he who now visits the tent of the patriarch, shall often cheer with his presence and irradiate with his light the myriads of his seed.

Who can read this amplification of the promise without glancing at the succeeding history of Israel. This whole bible is the record of Israel’s history, the comment of ages on the promise made by God. Look at the condition of all the families of the earth: see how darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people: note the nations building temples to Baal and to Ashtaroth, to Chemosh and to Jupiter: see the wise, see the mighty, bowing before the moon as she rides forth in her brightness, or piling their altars to the lord of day:—Then bend your eyes upon the land of Canaan, and hear the professions of her solemn service: “The Lord our God is one Jehovah:” Listen to the solemnities of her temple service, when her altar blazes high to the God of the whole earth, and clouds of incense fill the temple that crowns the hill of Zion. “Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him all his angels: praise ye him all his hosts. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps.” Mark her venerable priesthood, the long line of Aaron’s family: see her prophets often caught up in the visions of the Almighty, and note the floods of light that the prophetic spirit pours on God’s eternal purpose, on Zion’s lofty destiny, on the hope of all this world. Yes, let her tem-

ple and her priesthood, her prophets and apostles, tell how the God of Abraham was the God of all his seed. Let Israel dispersed but not destroyed, Israel now mixed with every nation under heaven but distinguished from them all, Israel deserted but not utterly forgotten, confirm to us the promise that in the recesses of futurity a day will yet be found that shall witness their return from all countries under heaven, when Jerusalem shall again be the city of their pride, and Canaan confirmed as the land of their descendants till her wealth shall contribute to the fires of the last judgment.—And let all the churches of the gentile world attest the faithfulness and fullness of this promise. You see Israel broken off from the church of the Most High, and gentile strangers adopted in her stead; you see Abram now hailed as a father of many nations, by those who professing the patriarch's faith evince the God of Abram to be their Father and their God. Still then you see the knowledge of the Highest, still you see the hope of life eternal, still you see the fruits of purity and piety connected with the church once headed by our patriarch. And it is there where he is hailed as the father of the faithful, there where his faith and his piety are followed, it is there and there alone, among all people under heaven, that you hear that loud and joyful acclamation, in many a language, swelled by many a tongue, "Blessing and honour and glory and power to him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Thus is Abram's God the God of all his seed; and the covenant of his mercy an everlasting covenant.

SERMON XVIII.

BIOGRAPHY OF ABRAHAM.—(CONTINUED.)

And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham. And he said, behold here I am. And he said take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” Gen. xxii. 1, 2.

“ALTHOUGH,” say the scriptures,—“Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, yet man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upwards.” It is, my dear friends, the severe but necessary discipline under which God’s goodness has placed all the families of the earth, that they may not be given up to utter forgetfulness of him. We know that uninterrupted prosperity and ease have a powerful tendency to intoxicate the heart, and to alienate it from its Maker. Such a result indeed speaks very unfavorably of the dispositions of human nature; as it ought rather to be the case that every new privilege and fresh source of enjoyment conferred by him should attach so much the more strongly our affections and confidence to the benign bestower. We do, however, know that such, in general, is not the fact. It is the pressure of calamity that cherishes

the sense of our dependance upon God; it is only when we are deprived of earth-born consolation that we seek eagerly the solace of our eternal friend. To meet these dispositions the administrations of Providence are admirably adapted. All individuals, all families, with here and there a solitary exemption, have just as many difficulties as they can well get along with; and however wisely we may plan and successfully accomplish such changes in our circumstances as promise something like unalloyed felicity; yet when all has succeeded even better than our wishes, we find ourselves, in point of real felicity, just where we were before. Or if it should at any time be our happiness to boast an exemption from the common experience and feeling upon this subject, if tranquility should perch for months upon the pillow, and more than contentment beam in every expression of the eye; yet, who will guarantee our peace from those sudden interruptions which the dispensations of Providence often work in a single hour; who will assure us that we may not yet encounter even more than a common portion of the common woe, when desolation, like a hurricane, shall break over our heads, and cover with wreck the smiling prospects that surround us.

It was a dispensation of the Almighty, thus sudden—thus unlooked for, that put a period to our services a very little time ago, when two of his own worshippers, while in the courts of his own house, and while the notes of his praise yet trembled on their lips, were summoned to their account before his awful throne. One minute they looked around upon a group of earthly worshippers, the next minute saw them spectators of the scene where Abraham and Isaac, and an incomprehensible multitude, the lofty

and the lowly, the aged and the young, give a loose to feelings of more than mortal utterance. God Almighty wields the energies of his own creation, and points the laws which his wisdom has established to the swift and certain execution of his will.

No condition, no prospects, no description of character, can secure us from these sudden inroads on all our plans of happiness. Affliction comes not of the earth; trouble springs not from the ground. Almighty God wields the creation which he himself has founded, and infinite wisdom can never be at a loss about marshalling it in such a way as shall certainly accomplish, naturally and infallibly, every dictate of his will.—No condition, no prospects, no description of character, can shield us from those alarms to which it is proper we should be subject, lest in short-lived felicity we forget our eternal home.

The foundations of our felicity may seem to all around us firm and deep-rooted as the everlasting hills, the prospects which gild the residue of our years may seem stable as eternity itself; he who springs his earthquake and unseats the hills can easily crumble the foundations of our greatness; he who rides forth in the darkly lowering tempest can wrap from our vision the prospects which had charmed it.

Thus suddenly, thus completely, were all the prospects of our patriarch darkened, when, in the bosom of his family and enjoying the tempered lustre of the evening of his life, the fearful mandate announced in this short sentence met his ear: "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will thee of." It is remarked in the intro-

duction to this narrative that in giving this commandment God was *tempting* Abraham. This word we now use in a restricted, and, almost always, I believe, in a bad sense. It was not so restricted when this translation was made, nor is the original word so translated to be thus restricted in its meaning. It is used as the general designation of those appeals which may be made either to the good or bad dispositions of the heart with a view to exhibit its real character. The trial in this instance was of Abram's devotion, whether he would cheerfully submit his will and wishes to the divine will; it was also the trial of his humility, whether he would bow to the dictates of his own understanding to the strange requisition which infinite wisdom made; finally, it was the trial of Abraham's faith:—The promise of God had taught him to expect that from this very Isaac should spring a mighty nation, that through the progeny of Isaac all nations should be blessed. Could Abraham obey this extraordinary mandate? could he offer up his son a sacrifice on mount Moriah, and yet believe that the promise should be fulfilled.

Common men would have hesitated, they might well have hesitated, before they determined on obedience to a commandment so shocking to their feelings, and so desolating to their hopes. But Abram did not hesitate—not a day—not an hour. With the morning light he rose; and summoning his son and two of his domestics, announced to them his speedy departure, required their attendance, and entered on immediate preparation for the journey. They who can estimate the immensity of the sacrifice he was about to make, and the circumstances of peculiar tenderness under which it was exacted, can best divine his feelings on this occasion. It was not the smallest

aggravation that while so many were nearly concerned in the event of this journey, all the immediate sorrow was his own, and must be carefully confined within his own bosom. It is a law of our nature—a law well adapted to strengthen the social bond, and to multiply and extend the charities of life—that the strongest emotions become less intolerable when we are permitted to vent our feelings in the audience of a friend. The tempest of our joys as well as of our sorrows often works a mortal issue when too mighty for our utterance. Like some of the mighty forces of this world pent up within narrow compass and labouring for expansion, if no readier vent be given, they burst the rind of earth and desolate whole provinces—thus swells, thus labours, thus bursts, the human heart, under the violence of feelings which we struggle to conceal. But let the bosom surcharged with high wrought emotion, communicate from its fullness to the bosom of a friend—let the tongue—let the eye, sluice the overburdened heart—and the feelings which first mounted with the violence of a whirlwind will subside to milder grades.

But this, the common privilege of grief—the ready and the cheap relief of those whom God has smitten, was not allowed to Abraham. He might not expound the occasion of his anguish; it was not even expedient that the anguish itself should be observed. But, with an heart all turmoil, he must preserve the semblance of ordinary tranquility; and witness without the utterance of a sigh the preparations for that journey which was to harrow up his soul.

Meanwhile every little circumstance in making this preparation—every little article packed up to aid the sacrifice, must have furnished so many new and strong appeals to

all a father's feelings. The solicitude of a son to promote a parent's wishes would no doubt engage Isaac busily in this scene of preparation; and what must he have felt who saw him thus engaged—busily engaged in forwarding their journey, unthinking that for himself it was a journey to the grave. Every look he gave, every step he took, every word he uttered, must have come home like daggers to the heart of Abraham.

And Sarah too, providing from her domestic stores things needful for their journey in those wild unsocial times, furnished new source of the bitterest reflections. Doating as she did on the son of her old age, solicitous for their comfort on a journey of such length, inquiring and calculating the time of their return—what force was in the stroke which smote the heart of Abraham when, on turning from his tent, a mother's fond adieu was directed to a son, an only son, whose face she should no more see.—Under circumstances like these—and no doubt with feelings thus natural—thus acute, the patriarch led on the melancholy way.

Nor was it a slight aggravation of the pains of this trial that the way was very long. Gerar lay at the southwest extremity of Canaan. Mount Moriah, on which the temple of Jerusalem afterwards stood and to which the footsteps of our patriarch were directed, lay in a north-east direction, and distant from seventy to ninety miles. Here then was leisure for the ready play of ten thousand varying feelings. Might the commandment have been executed as speedily as it was given unexpectedly; had no occasions been presented to call forth and marshal the strong feelings of nature in the husband's and parent's breast; had no time been allotted to those ever recurring

trains of melancholy thought which by little and little will sap the firmest purpose and unnerve the strongest mind;—the enthusiasm of the patriarch might have sustained him in the task, and have then only expired with his expiring son. But enthusiasm is a feeling of ephemeral duration. No high-wrought feeling can live unchanged through the succession of several days and nights, especially if locked up in one solitary breast. The aid of such feelings was therefore denied to Abraham. He must pursue a steady purpose with a steady heart; and 3 days were assigned him for the full weight of his afflictions to press upon that heart.

It was while thus beset that “the third day in the morning Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off.” It was a sight that must have lifted to their highest point the floodgates of his sorrow. Despair, we know, will catch at the faintest hope: deep anguish will cling to the most slender solace. It was still a consolation to this anguish-riven father, while pursuing his sad journey, to gaze upon the youth of high and tender hope whom he knew he soon must lose; it was still an assuagement of his unequalled grief, that while he journeyed along, his Isaac’s voice saluted him. Every accent that penetrated to the heart, every look, every action even the most unimportant, would be carefully treasured up, that the heart might brood upon it when nothing but such fond remembrances remained.—But even to this, the most languid of all enjoyments, the last slender privilege of the wretched and the hopeless, he must now bid adieu; for yonder was the mountain on which his son must die—die by the hand of the father who had reared him, and who at that moment loved him as he loved his life.

His heart may have palpitated, his lip may have quivered, his tongue may have faltered, but his purpose was faithful to the mandate of his God. It was natural to apprehend that servants who must have loved and felt for a master so amiable and deserving as Isaac's after life evinced him to have been, would naturally interfere to prevent the execution of a decree so terrible; and, independently of a wish to preclude their interference, it was natural for the patriarch to desire no witnesses of his strong emotion. He therefore did not permit their attendance any further; but enjoined them to wait, at the foot of the mountain, his own and his son's return, if indeed that son should be permitted to return; as hope, that never totally deserts the miserable, whispered that in some way it possibly might so fall out.

He then hastened to consummate the last act of this sad tragedy. Taking himself the knife that was to slay and the fire that was to consume the yet unconscious sacrifice, he laid the wood upon the shoulder of his son. Who can mark this innocent struggling up the mountain, and bending under the load that was destined to consume him, without thinking of an event which this same mountain witnessed two thousand years after, when from the foot of mount Moriah another Innocent, greater and better than the son of Abraham, took up a heavy cross upon his mangled shoulder—the cross on which his adversaries nailed him, and bore it up the steep of an opposing mountain!

Thus they ascended, "both of them together." To Abraham it was a moment of unutterable interest, because doubtless a moment of unutterable agony. No one will believe that under such circumstances his thoughts could

flit from object to object. No one will imagine that on the real object of this journey he either would or could break silence. The patriarch's lips were sealed. Isaac, it would seem, was the first to speak. But it must have been as the knell of death—as the trump of the last judgment—on the ear of Abraham, when the unsuspecting victim thus saluted him:—“My father, behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?” “God will provide himself a lamb,” was all the father's answer. It was all that he *could* say; and it speaks a volume. Isaac was himself the lamb for the burnt-offering: and how could the tongue of any parent utter it!

But the moment was now come when the secret which had laboured in the breast of Abraham must necessarily be divulged. You see them reach the spot that God had designated; a rude altar of stones is speedily constructed; the wood is laid in order; and nothing now remains but to consummate the sacrifice. Again no doubt the inquiring eye of Isaac is cast around in quest of the burnt-offering. But it is speedily made known to him that he is himself to be the victim. In what language this intelligence was communicated, with what emotions of surprise, of terror, of horror, it was received, we pretend not even to imagine. We know how natural is the love of life to all men; especially to those who are in the springtide of their lives, and in highly prosperous circumstances. We know that sudden death can never make its approaches under any other guise than that of the king of terrors. Nor would it have been strange if such a feeling had prompted the most determined resistance to the accomplishment of Abraham's now declared intention. That Isaac should have wept, should have entreated, should have argued, should have attempted every mean of deliverance from

such a death, would be expected by every one, could be censured by no one. But by the son of Abraham such means need not be used. He was by no means in his childhood when these things were transacted. He had already attained his thirtieth year. And how could that weak, that wasted old man, whose life now numbered one hundred and thirty years—how could he have enforced obedience to his will, if the slightest resistance had been determined on? In the full vigour of youth, how could the old man, feeble as the grasshopper, have coped with such energies when exerted for existence? Swift-footed as the roe, how could the step of age overtake him, had he chosen to escape?

We celebrate not alone, then, the faith of Abraham. We here erect the memorials of our homage to a son worthy a parent who was the progenitor of nations—and well named “the friend of God.” The God of Abraham was the God of Isaac too. Early in life the patriarch had taught this son of his old age to lisp his Creator’s name. The instructions and example of so good a parent had exercised due influence over the heart of such a son. Reverence for the Most High and devotion to his will had grown with Isaac’s growth. And now, when his principles were put to a proof more trying than ever crowned martyr with the meed of victory, it was the privilege and blessedness of the patriarch to find, that the pains he had taken were not bestowed in vain. Did ever son display such confidence in the integrity and discretion of any earthly parent! For Isaac it would seem had no security for the lawfulness or necessity of the demanded sacrifice, but as he rested on the truth and sound discretion of the parent whom he loved. How great must have been his affection

and devotion to that parent, as well as to him who was their common hope, let all the circumstances of this case declare. And let the circumstance bear home upon the heart of every parent who prizes the confidence and attachment of his child. That integrity must be chained to the eternal throne; the child whom you love must know whom you worship, must read in the general tenor of your life the pledge of your discretion and of your good intentions, for they never can confide in an hour of peril and darkness to a guidance which affords them a less certain pledge of safety. Nothing under heaven so hallows human character, nothing so certainly, because nothing so deservedly, enlists all human confidence, as the unquestioned exhibition of such a life and feeling as can spring from nothing but the fellowship of God. Let your character approach to that elevated simplicity, that disinterested kindness, that unsullied purity, which binds the allegiance of the nations to the throne of the Eternal. Imitate his excellence, become familiar with his purity, and the heart which yields your title to the friendship of the Highest, will spontaneously apportion to you of the confidence and reverence which none but his friends and imitators can inherit. Do you prize then the strong sentiments of filial trust and love which Isaac evinced toward his father Abraham? Do you prize the respect, the attachment, of your friends, the best wishes of your acquaintance, the veneration of the world? Take then the course of Abraham. Let your piety be undoubted, your ways without reproach, your motives above suspicion; and you will have acquired a solidity and a lustre for your name which nothing else can give it.

Would you have a child like Isaac, affectionate, devo-

ted, confiding without measure? Rear up that child in the fear of the Almighty. Let him imbibe ingenuousness from intercourse with the Omniscient; purity and tenderness and nobleness of spirit from the pattern of all excellence. He who knows God can best appreciate the worth of all the friends of God; he whose heart is moulded properly toward him, will seldom fail to act an appropriate part in all the relations of the son, the friend and citizen. In the hour of your prosperity you need not distrust his smile. In the hour of your adversity his magnanimity will not fail you. In an hour like this which crushed the heart of Abraham, you will find every thing to reconcile you to the behests of Providence. And in the day of the last judgment, when all destinies shall be fixed, when all the advantages of education and of fortune shall have perished as a dream, he will bless the wiser care which led him to a covert by which he stands shielded from the desolations of that hour.

Such were the tempers to which Isaac had been trained. And such were their fruits when the hour of trial came. He questioned not the tenderness or integrity of the parent whose piety he knew, whose hope he inherited. He murmured not at the requisition of eternal sovereignty. It was God who commanded, and God could do no wrong. Under impressions like these he stretched forth his hands. His father bound them. He then laid him on the pile, and reached forth for the knife that was to end this scene of agony. And now one single minute and the palpitating heart of Isaac would cease its maddening throbs. One little minute and the conflicting emotions of an unhappy father would give place to the calm of desolated feeling. It was a moment consecrated in heaven and on earth to

the unparalleled devotion of a parent and a child. Ethereal spirits survey the ways of men; and doubtless had the film that dims our mortal sight been brushed from the eye of Abraham, looking up as he did before he drew the mortal stroke, he would have seen the battlements of heaven crowned with beings innumerable waiting the catastrophe in breathless expectation. But that catastrophe it was not theirs to witness. For there also rested the Eternal Father's eye—there rested the eye of God our Saviour; and having evinced before creation the devotion of this pair, having justified the honors with which he designed to load them, his mandate arrested the intended stroke. "Lay not," he said, "thine hand upon the lad; neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."—We may imagine, but it were folly to attempt a description, of the feelings which agitated this firm but hapless pair when the authority that had bound them pronounced the unhopèd release. There is an agony that surpasses the common forms of woe, and mocks the expressions to which common woes give birth. We have seen the lip quiver while the tongue refused all utterance—we have seen the eyeball roll and stare, while the fires of desperation dried up the tears that should have moistened them. We have seen such a being unexpectedly relieved, and placed upon the footing of ordinary men. And we have seen his mighty sorrows, as if then only brought down to the level of common grief, when nothing more remained to be apprehended, gush forth from the eye in deluges of tears, and from the bosom in expressions of the most clamorous sorrow. We have seen these things, and we can imagine to ourselves the conduct of A-

braham, the conduct of that son, when they first obtained deliverance from so mighty an oppression.

But the father of the faithful acted with consistency whatever were his circumstances. Borne along as he was on the full tide of his joy, straining to his bosom the son for whom he had prepared far different destination, he was not unmindful of him whose voice he had obeyed to the hazard of all he loved—whose voice had now relieved him. “A ram caught in a thicket by his horns,” arrested Abraham’s attention; a ram “for a burnt offering,” of heaven’s own providing, as he had prophetically but unwittingly suggested to his son. “And Abraham,” says our narrator, “went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering, in the stead of his son.” Its life went for his life—a lamb of heaven’s providing. Well might this deliverance be commemorated by the patriarch. Well might the spot become sacred in his sight. Well might he designate it by a prophetic name. Jehovah-jireh, “the Lord will provide.” It was Jehovah-jireh, “the holy hill of Zion;” the spot where afterwards stood the temple of Jerusalem; where the solemn services of Israel were performed; where innumerable lambs offered up upon the altar, shewed forth the substitution of that Lamb of God whose life went for our lives, and whom God himself provided that the world in him might have peace. It was Jehovah-jireh, the holy hill of Zion, where the nations, reconciled by the Lamb of God’s providing, were taught to disclaim all confidence in idols, taught to confide in their all-sufficient friend, taught to rely on the bounty of his providence and on the riches of his grace, and to say of all their temporal as well as eternal wants, Jehovah-jireh, “the Lord will provide.”—AMEN.

SERMON XIX.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Job xix. 25.

THERE are few men so hardened in iniquity as to calculate with certainty and without emotion on taking up their residence in hell. However greedily they may indulge themselves in sin, they are rarely found to do it under the idea that the fruit of their doings shall be exacted at their hands. There is a secret something in the breast of every man that prompts him to cherish the hope that he shall yet return from following after vanities in time to redeem his soul from death. And though there are very few who cannot perceive the fallacy of this expectation in relation to their fellows, there are fewer still who find the least difficulty in admitting it in its most extended application to themselves. Had we none other, this circumstance alone would afford a striking and irrefragible proof of the infatuation consequent on sin. It is notorious that of the many millions who have, in every age, silenced the monitions of conscience, and calmed the occasional perturbation of their minds with these fallacious hopes, there are but comparatively few who have been so happy as to realize their expectations, while a vast majority have sunk without a struggle into all that horror and all that woe their iniquities deserve.

If we turn our attention to the innumerable multitudes that compose the visible church, where alone we are authorized to look for those who have escaped this dread infatuation, and where alone we may expect to find an hope full of immortality, we shall perceive that *even there* there are not wanting numbers who solace themselves through life with a like delusive hope, and at last are made partakers in a like condemnation. O, how often has the church seen men who towered high in the estimation of their fellows, and equally high in their own estimation, against whom the sentence has been issued from the throne, "cut them down; why cumber they the ground?" How many has she seen who started out with a fair profession, and gave gladness to the hearts of them who wished her well, and yet, after a promising course of many years, have "turned from the holy commandment," "denied the Lord that bought them," and openly, *avowedly*, "gloried in their shame!" How many has she seen earnest, zealous, indefatigable in their preparation for the world to come, who yet have wandered through life among the dark mountains of error, and stumbled, and fallen to rise no more!

Viewing these things barely in relation to those who have been thus deluded, the lesson they afford is awful and impressive; but when we reflect that *we too* are in the body, that sooner or later *our hope also* shall be sifted, and that our own most precious interests are suspended by that hope, they propound the question with inimitable emphasis to every son of earth, *and where shalt thou be in eternity?— Ah! where indeed shall I be in eternity?* responds the trembling spirit. If there be so many now cast out from the presence and enjoyment of God, who once looked forward to the other world with all the serenity of hope; if the

broad seal of apostacy has been planted on the forehead of numbers who seemed to promise much more fair than I do; and if so many have “perished for lack of knowledge” who esteemed themselves wise in the things pertaining unto life; ah, who can tell whether “the light that is in me be not darkness!” whether I also may not turn aside, while my hope, like “the hypocrites ——, shall perish!”

It is easy for professors of religion to indulge a kind of general hope, *and to talk about it too*, while they see little probability of its being speedily put to the test, and while the things of eternity are but faintly recollected; but when a sense of them becomes deeply impressed upon the mind, the importance of the subject annihilates its distance, and the unutterably momentous interests it involves, while they render them above all things anxious for a solid assurance of their safety, almost deprive them of the hope that such assurance can ever be obtained. The example of hypocritical professors, of heretics, of apostates, stares them in the face; and the known deceitfulness of their own hearts, and the power of their corruptions, form an additional barrier to their wishes. Difficult, however, as it may be to arrive at the desired conclusion, the thing is not impossible. In the text we find an instance of one who triumphed in the hope of a joyful immortality, even in an age when the way of life and the ministration of the Spirit were little known, and at a time too when every circumstance apparently concurred to overthrow the best established confidence. Compared with his amazing, but most delightful hope, the unusual complication of his griefs, and the unexampled patience with which they were endured, shrink into matters of ordinary note. Our hearts can enter into all his feelings when we hear him recount his pains

and losses, or mourn the still more grievous absence of his God: we think we can in some measure understand his meaning when the accents of humble resignation dwell upon his lips: but when the strong expressions of his confidence salute our ear, when in the midst of all his sorrows we hear him cry, in the plenitude of his assurance, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," we wonder and adore, but dare not think of imitation. O, if, like Job, I knew "that my Redeemer liveth," says many an heir of heaven, like him *I too* could be "patient in tribulation," and, like him, I could rejoice in the prospects of eternity, though the "candle" of the Lord did not "shine upon my head." But was not this an extraordinary assurance vouchsafed in compliance with an extraordinary case? Or is it possible that a common christian may reach such *full* persuasion that his Redeemer liveth? And if it be, what are the allowed *scriptural* grounds on which it may be rested? These questions are of the utmost moment. They involve the peace and prosperity of millions. To prove that full assurance is attainable, and to point out the ground on which it must be built, are the objects of this discourse.

I. We are to prove that full assurance is attainable.

The truth of this position will appear from the following considerations.

In the first place: The nature of the dispensation of grace *admits* of full assurance. Were the salvation provided for mankind a something entirely disconnected from our present state and feelings, there could be no way of our obtaining assurance of an interest in it without the intervention of a revelation immediately from God. On this account we find that, however ready people of no religion may be to entertain a hope that all either is, or eventually

shall be well with them, yet there are few instances in which it ever enters into their thoughts that certainty about this point may be expected in the present life. Ignorant of the real and close connexion that subsists between the church on earth and the church in heaven, between the *state* of a believer's soul in this world and the state to which he shall be ultimately advanced, and between the individual members that are upon the earth and their glorious head in heaven,—ignorant of all these things, what imaginable foundation could they have for the idea that complete assurance of an interest in Jesus is attainable?

The true state of the case, however, is very different. Instead of being kept locked up among the inscrutable purposes of God, to be conferred upon we know not whom, when the disembodied spirits shall appear before the throne, the salvation of which a sinner is made partaker is proffered for his individual acceptance in this present life, and it is *only* in this life that he can obtain an interest in it. "This commandment," says God to the children of Israel, "this commandment, which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off: it is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." "That is," says the apostle Paul, "the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in' thine heart that God hath raised him from the

dead, thou shalt be saved." And that same dispensation of grace which puts the issues for eternity upon our conscious, *voluntary* acceptance or rejection of the remedy proposed, has likewise made provision for fitting those who have believed in Jesus for the full possession and enjoyment of that inheritance to which they have thus secured a title. Now then, if the saved sinner upon earth hold by the same title with the triumphant saint in heaven; if God, even this world, "put a" marked, an essential "difference between the clean and the unclean," between him that feareth the Lord, and him that feareth him not; and if these be things about which a man's own mind and heart must be conversant, so that they fall directly within the compass of his observation; it clearly follows that the *nature* of the dispensation of grace, so far from militating against the possibility of full assurance, not only allows complete room for its existence, but in fact affords a strong presumption in its favour.

In the second place: The scriptures teach us that it is attainable. The first epistle of John is full and explicit in its testimony to this truth. "Hereby *we know* that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight.—And he that *keepeth his commandments dwelleth* in him and *he in him*: and hereby *we know* that he abideth in us by *the spirit* which he hath given us." And in the last chapter of that same epistle, having descanted at some length on brotherly love, the obedience of faith, the testi-

mony of the Spirit, and union with the Lord Jesus, under the special idea that they are marks and essential properties of the new nature, the apostle winds up the whole with this declaration, "these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, *that ye may know that ye have eternal life.*"

The apostle Peter likewise gives testimony in favour of this doctrine. "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts," says he, in the third chapter of his first epistle; "and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." And, again, in the first chapter of his second epistle, he exhorts believers to "give diligence to make their calling and election sure: for if ye do these things," says he, "ye shall never fall." The apostle could not mean that they should give diligence to bring about *the fact* of their calling and election; for, passing by the circumstance that he was writing to "brethren," "to them who had obtained like precious faith" with himself, it is evident that their "calling and election" must necessarily precede the exertion of any diligence at all; and as both these flow immediately out of the good pleasure of God, it would be talking nonsense to make them the subjects of human exertion. If therefore the apostle mean any thing at all he must mean that christian professors should labour to assure themselves of the fact that they are indeed the chosen and called of God: and the reason he subjoins for giving this exhortation accords exactly with our view of the exhortation itself. It is that by thus giving diligence, "an entrance shall be administered unto them *abundantly* into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The apostle Paul holds up the doctrine of assurance as a motive to perseverance in good works. Having com-

mended the believing Hebrews on account of their "labour of love" and "ministering to the saints," he proceeds to express his "desire that every one of them would shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end." And he rests the consolatory doctrine on the immutability of God, thereby shewing them that there was not a possibility of their being deceived or disappointed from that quarter. "God," says he, "willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

But there were no end of quoting passages of scripture in proof of our position. They abound in every part of it; and especially among the doctrinal and devotional parts, we can hardly find a chapter or a page in which the doctrine is not explicitly recognized; or something taught that evidently rests upon the assumption of it.

In the third place: Many of God's people have actually attained to full assurance.

We have already mentioned the instance afforded in our text. Let us view it a little more closely. Job has been celebrated all the world over on account of his admirable display of patience. That patience resulted from unusual, and we may add, *unshaken* confidence. He lived in an age when there were but few who professed obedience to the true God; and fewer still who had not corrupted his worship, and joined with it the worship of their idols. During this long and comparatively dark period, we find that God was usually pleased to distinguish the few who were "witnesses for him that he is God," with an unusual

degree of outward prosperity; thereby testifying to the minds and consciences of men, in these favourable dispensations of his providence, that his service was not without its reward, and that "the silver and the gold" and "cattle on a thousand hills" were his. And in doing this he acted up to the principle long afterwards expressed in his word, "them that honour me I will honour." This fact appears to have been so common, and so generally recognized, that to it we may with little doubt refer, as the principle upon which men founded their suspicions of the real character of any of their fellows, when the tide of their prosperity was turned, and the current of providence appeared to be set against them. "To which of the saints wilt thou turn?" said Eliphaz to this afflicted man.

Job was among that little band who bore testimony for Jehovah that he is God. And as he cheerfully hazarded all consequences in behalf of that truth which was the life and consolation of his own soul, God would not suffer him to be a loser, even in the profits and honors of this present world. Sons and daughters grew up before him; servants and cattle, and every thing that constituted eastern wealth were bestowed upon him in almost unparalleled abundance; "so that this man," says his historian, "was the greatest of all the men of the east." Favored with this abundance, he did not "wax fat and kick against the Lord;" "his way he kept, and did not decline. Neither did he go back from the commandment of his lips." As in wealth, so likewise in honor and in happiness he abounded. Hear his own account. "His candle shone upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness;—the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; the Almighty was with me,

my children were about me; I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil. When I went out to the gate, through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street, the young men saw me and hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem." When we reflect upon the character of this uncommon personage, and call to mind what were usually, *at that period*, "the ways of God with man," we are ready to conclude that the sun of his prosperity would never have gone down; but that his "path, like that of the just, would shine brighter and brighter, unto the perfect day." And so Job likewise thought. And so his friends expected. But at that moment when the tide of his prosperity ran highest; when he was rejoicing in the goodness of Almighty God bestowed upon himself, and soliciting that the blessing might descend upon them whose interests lay nearest to his heart, *at that very moment* sudden "destruction came upon him like a whirlwind," swept off in an instant his vast accumulations,

"And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
"Left not a wreck behind."

His numerous herds became the prey of robbers; his flocks were consumed by lightning from heaven; his servants

butchered with the sword of the invader; his children, the pride and hope and consolation of his age, smitten at once in the midst of their festivity, and hurried together into the eternal world; himself covered with a loathsome and tormenting disease from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot; his wife, the friend of his youth, the companion of his prosperous days, turned advocate for the arch fiend of hell, and *labouring* to accomplish his perdition; the sly suggestion, the invidious sneer, the cutting sarcasm, "the finger of pointed scorn," the loud opprobrious laugh, the common, *and the only* homage to his virtues; those very friends, *those men of God*, who came to comfort him, joined to suspect, to accuse, to prove, to *condemn* him as an hypocrite; and to fill up the measure of his griefs, the light of that countenance which gives peace and joy to the afflicted was withdrawn; and to sense and reason and experience he was left apparently without a friend and without a comforter in all the universe of God.

We attempt not to display the difficulties of believing in such a state as this. The case speaks louder for itself than language can speak for it. Suffice it to observe, that *in that age of darkness*, in the midst of these unparalleled afflictions, this deserted, this holy, this wonderful man of God, "held fast his integrity," nor gave up for a moment the assured confidence that his "Redeemer liveth."

In passing down through succeeding ages we meet with prophets and apostles who placed their reliance on the same Redeemer, and were animated by the same exhilarating hope. "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures" of the whole world, they — "endured, as seeing him who is invisible." Threats and promises were alike ineffectual to tempt them to keep back

or mutilate the truth. Some of them "were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented." If we inquire how it was that they were stimulated to face such sufferings, we are told that they "*knew* in whom they had believed," "rejoiced in hope of the glory of God," and were "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, should be able to separate them from the love of God."

Nor is it only among scriptural characters, and persons who held exalted stations in the church, that we are to look for full assurance. In every age and in every country where the gospel of God's salvation has resounded, there have been multitudes of all descriptions, and of either sex, who rejoiced in an hope full of immortality, and began to "sing the songs of Zion" even "in a strange land." This hope has often cheered the haunts of poverty; and shed a brightness and a glory upon the most trying dispensations. Supported by this, the children of God have manfully sustained the agonizing pangs of death; and while all that could rend the heart was combined with all that could torture the enfeebled frame, with serenity, *with ecstasy*, they have hailed the king of terrors, and received his message as a mandate from the skies. Supported by this, the host of blessed martyrs, "loving not their lives unto the death," have borne unvarying and unceasing testimony to the

truths of God; and, hurling defiance in the teeth, and speaking terror to the hearts of their judges and accusers, have magnanimously braved the gibbet and the rack, and shouted alleluiah's amid the flames.

II. The *grounds* on which a scriptural assurance rests is the next subject of consideration.

At the head of these may be placed the conscious exercise of that living faith which spurns the thought of any deliverance short of *God's* salvation; and cleaves affectionately,—firmly,—*solely* to the Lord Jesus as righteousness and strength. Here is a point in which all christians agree, and in which none but christians can agree. Man as he came out of the hands of his Creator had immediate access to the throne of God. He needed no Mediator, and he knew of none. Fallen as he is from holiness and happiness, he still knows nothing of a Mediator, unless the Spirit of God convince his understanding, change the whole tendencies of his soul, and “preach unto him Jesus.” In him there is salvation for the chief of sinners, and the word of truth declares that “there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” He has brought in an everlasting righteousness, in which the scrutiny of omniscience can discover nothing lacking; and the most aggravated transgressions of the most incorrigible sinners are lighter than vanity when put in balance with the atonement of his blood. This salvation, so rich, so free, so absolutely necessary, is proffered to every son of earth to whom the gospel comes. We are told for our encouragement that Jesus had no other errand into this world than “to seek and to save that which was lost:” that the most guilty, the most fearful, need not and ought not entertain a doubt about his personal acceptance,

provided he is only willing to come; because "the Son of man came not to call the righteous *but sinners* to repentance," the vilest, the most miserable sinners,—the viler and more miserable they are, just so much the more completely do they accord with the object of his mission. Invitations are heaped upon invitations, entreaties upon entreaties. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I* will give you rest:"—"the spirit and the bride say, *come*: and let him that heareth say, *come*: and let him that is athirst come: and *whosoever will*," however vile his person, however aggravated his offences, however hopeless his condition, however destitute he may think himself of faith, *if he only be willing, let him come*, "and take the water of life freely." On declarations such as these is founded the sinner's warrant,—*every sinner's warrant*, to accept the great salvation; and they are backed by the most solemn assurances of him who is "faithful and true," that "him that cometh" he "will *in no wise* cast out."

Would we know then what is *our state*? what are *our prospects* for eternity? The whole concern is resolvable into this single, simple question, *do we* or *do we not* rest on the Lord Jesus as he is offered in the gospel? If we have been convinced that only "in Jesus there is redemption, through his blood;" if we have flown or *now* fly to him as our covert from the storm; if our souls abhor that hope which rests on any other bottom, and are made willing to receive grace on grace's terms; if in the secret chamber where no eye beholds or ear hears but the eye and ear of God, we can make our appeal to him, thou God knowest that the desire of my heart is to be found in Jesus, and that mine hope is fixed on him for light, for purity, for *life*; and if when unbelief rises and struggles in the bosom, we

can lament before him that it abounds so much, flee to him to give deliverance from it, and in the very teeth of our doubtings and waverings still plead the fullness and freeness of his grace; if we can assure ourselves of these things, then we *know* that we are believers in his Son; and if there be any bowels of compassion in God, if any virtue in the blood of Jesus, if any truth in the declarations of his word, we may *also know* that to us, *even to us*, shall be performed the great and gracious things which he hath promised.

Many of God's most precious and most approved children have looked back during the course of a long and useful life on their very first reception of the Lord Jesus, as their most stable ground of assurance; and while stretched on the bed of death, have derived from it a degree of comfort and clearness about their state before God which they sought in vain from any other quarter.

In the second place: Where the gospel of Jesus has been received in the love of it, the appropriate effects will follow. It is not possible that it ever should be revealed in the heart of a sinner without "teaching him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." The scriptures, therefore, lay it down as a position not to be called in question, that they who are appointed to salvation are "chosen — through sanctification of the spirit," as well as "belief of the truth;" and consequently, that "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure." "If any man," say they, "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new:" "Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof:

neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. — Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" This distinction has a foundation in the very nature of things. Sin is the proper element of corrupted man. His views, his affections, his faculties, are fitted only for the servitude of sin. His "carnal mind is enmity against God;" and the very notion of such enmity involves in it the idea of all that can oppose his authority, his purity, his justice, his love, and every attribute that constitutes the glory of his nature, and insures the blessedness of them that behold his face in innocence. A salvation, therefore, which freed him from the guilt and punishment of sin, while it left him still under its reigning power, would not deserve that name. To such an one the love, the peace, the purity, the alleluias of heaven would be hateful and horrible as the punishments of hell. God deals not thus with his miserable creatures. If he causes them to "see good," he fits them to enjoy it; if he extends his pardons and his favours, it must be done in such a way as shall leave the glory of his holiness unsullied. But how could a pure and holy God admit into his presence and communion a creature in whom the power of sin remained, and forever should remain, unbroken? The thing speaks for itself: it is absurd: it is impossible. A change there *must be, a complete, a radical* change, on every soul of man who is made a child of God, and an heir of the glory that shall be revealed. And it is only on the certainty, *the absolute certainty* of such a change

that a sinner is authorized to found complete assurance of his safety. When the regenerating Spirit comes, he alters the state of the affections toward God. *There* the disorder of the soul commenced, *there* must be the commencement of the cure. "My son, give me thine *heart*," is the requisition of the scriptures. Unless this be complied with, it is vain to think of heaven. *The heart*,—*the heart* is the primary object of attention, "for out of *it* are the issues of life." Where *that* is right with God, corruption forms no barrier to assurance, for none can yield him the homage of the heart but he who has been "transformed by the renewing of his mind." Wherever that has been effected, the soul is brought back from all its wanderings and made to fix on God as the centre of its happiness. In him is "the perfection of beauty," which, while the eye of faith discerns, the heart most cordially approves. In conformity to his image it places the perfection of its nature; and in the light of his countenance the treasures of its joy. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," it sees, acknowledges, *feels* it to be most just that he alone should sway the sceptre "whose right it is to reign."

It is plain that where such a change has taken place in the affections, there must result a total change of conduct. The heart which loves a pure and holy God, will also love the purity and holiness of his commandments. "O, how I love thy law," says one who was thus renewed, "it is my meditation all the day." Obedience to his precepts will therefore be the prompt and cheerful obedience of *the heart*; not that cold, unwilling, *interested* thing which the natural man works out in the bitterness of his spirit, and presents

To God as an austere oppressive being, rigorously exacting a hateful and hated service. Cordial devotion to his service, acquiescence in his dispensations, affection for his people, and attention to his worship, will not only appear most reasonable in themselves, but will, in fact, be maintained and cherished as both natural and pleasing to the renewed mind. And, in a word, "whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report," will be thought of, approved, practised, as most consonant with the gracious *habits* of the soul; and while it finds in the exercise of these things its proper elements, it yields them up in prompt and grateful homage to the authority of him who is its all in all. We do not pretend to say that a regenerate man is freed from the commission of sin so long as he remains in the body. To this no man living can lay claim. The very best find a "law in their members, warring against the law of their mind and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin." Iniquities will, therefore, very frequently prevail against them; too often will they be prompted to lay up treasures upon earth; and, notwithstanding all their care, and all their circumspection, the most spiritual of their services will be tainted with corruption. But "the hidden man of the heart" has nothing to do in these things. He hates, he prays, he struggles, he obstests against them; and while abashed at their frequent success, resisting with constancy all their efforts, and aspiring after conformity to the image of his Maker, he sighs for the coming of that happy, *happy* hour, when "death shall be swallowed up in victory." Perfection of graces is not necessary to the ascertaining their reality. And no precise measure of attainment can or should be set in order to our forming an assured judg-

ment of a safe condition. If their existence be certainly known, that is all we need. Weak indeed they may be at first; often obscured by the prevalence of corruption, and unceasingly opposed by the arts of satan; but if they be really there, they will at times strongly manifest themselves: and though their highly favored possessor may often go mourning, and stumble, and fall into the depths, yet in the faith and by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall still press forward, "going on from strength to strength, till at last he appear before God in Zion."

We will find nothing like this in the character of the carnal man. His heart never expands with a sentiment of love to God; his conduct is never marked with a single instance of acceptable worship or obedience. The highest encomiums he bestows upon the framer of his spirit are but the effusions of hypocrisy; or if here ally speak the sentiments of his mind, it is incense offered to the idol of his own imagination. He does not,—he cannot love the Jehovah of this bible. If he indeed pretend to such a thing, he offers violence to truth, and flings out calumny against the King of Heaven. *Self* is the deity he worships; and to the aggrandizement of *self* his thoughts and actions are exclusively directed. Take the most promising instance you can find: pass by the choice spirits of philosophy, who are ever venting the virulence of their enmity against the cross of Christ, in precious anthems on the charms of virtue and the dignity of man; pass by your generous, upright, "moral character," whose conduct none impeaches, and who vaunts a disposition to make every body happy; pass by your wily, calculating professor of religion, who says a great many good things, and performs a great many good actions, only to immolate them upon

the altar of his vanity, or convert them into passports to the treasury of mammon; pass by all these and pitch upon the man who *feels* that he is a guilty miserable sinner, who *does* look forward to death and eternity, and who is *in earnest* in his preparation for the judgment to come. His sighs, his prayers, his strugglings, his good works, give him a claim upon our attention, and speak to the conscience of every candidate for heaven. Yet even in this most promising,—*pitiable* plight of the unregenerate man, we shall find that *self* is the origin, *self* the end of all his actions; and that even when “the arrows of the Almighty are drinking up his spirit,” he will say to his own arm, thou art my deliverer; and in the unbelief and pride and self-sufficiency of his heart, turn with abhorrence from the remedy of God. And what is there really excellent, what that looks like heaven, in all this? What is there like conformity to the image of God, what like love to his commandments in the unnatural and forced obedience of them who have nothing but the fear of hell before their eyes, and whom the lash of conscience, not “the love of Christ constraineth?” Their “*root*,” their “*root*” is “rottenness,” no wonder that their “*blossom*” should go up as “*dust*.” A man may “speak with the tongues of angels,” he may “understand all mysteries, and all knowledge,” he may “have faith to remove mountains,” and “bestow all his goods to feed the poor,” nay, he may “give his body to be burned,” and after all, if he “have not charity,” if his *heart* be not right with God, these things shall only serve to heighten the horrors of his hell.

The “trees of righteousness” are “the planting of Jehovah.” “He is a rock, his work is perfect.” Every thing about it proclaims it to be perfect. And we have his own

assurance that in whomsoever "he hath begun a good work," he "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Grace and glory are therefore intimately connected. Where the former is not found, there cannot be a shadow of title to the latter. But where the Spirit of God has effectually operated to the bringing from darkness into light, and from the bondage of satan "into the glorious liberty of the children of God," there we are compelled to acknowledge the beginnings of that life which he will carry on till it be perfected in glory everlasting. The alternative, then, is short and simple; "if we live after the flesh we shall die," but if God, by his enlivening and illuminating Spirit is fitting us for glory, *glory shall be our portion*.

In the third place: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." It is a truth of the utmost importance, and most clearly taught in scripture, that the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of every believer, from the moment in which they are "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son;" and that while he is God's seal, whereby they are marked,—set apart,—distinguished, as his peculiar property, he is to them "the earnest,"—the *pledge*, of the heavenly inheritance, into the possession of which God thereby binds himself in due time to introduce them. "Hereby we know that God abideth in us, *by the spirit* which he hath given us." And again: "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth *the Spirit* of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then heir of God through Christ." And to set this matter beyond the possibility of cavilling or doubt, we are told in the most explicit and universal terms, that "if any man have not the

Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The testimony of the Spirit consists either in discovering to the people of God his own gracious operations upon their hearts, and thereby assuring them that "the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon" them; or in lifting the soul above the consideration of marks and characters into sweet and immediate communion with God himself, so that they *feel* and are persuaded of their interest in his favour without the aid of rational deduction.

Christian experience and the word of God alike bear witness that a high degree of grace may subsist in the heart of a sinner, and yet the soul be so harrassed with fear, or blinded by the arts and influence of satan, that it cannot with certainty lay the finger on any one mark of a gracious state, and say that of a surety *that mark* belongs to it. But when the Holy Spirit has a mind to convince a person of the truth and efficacy of his workmanship, he shines into the heart with his own native light, and, dispelling the gloom in which it was enveloped, discovers to him clearly the state of his affections, and ascertains beyond all contradiction the nature, origin and motives of his conduct; *and then he opens up the scriptures*, enables him to apprehend *the spirit* of his word, and makes application of the principles and characters there laid down to what he feels within. And thus having caused him to see in his own heart a clear and indisputable transcript of these things, he *bears in* upon the soul, with irresistable evidence, the comfortable, exhilarating truth that *it* also is "his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus."

But in mentioning the testimony afforded by the Spirit, we have reference principally to that nearness of access to the throne of God, that sensible communion

with him, which, for the time, is paramount to all the evidence of character, and almost supersedes the exercise of faith. It is only on particular occasions that this species of evidence is vouchsafed to christians. "The life which they live in the flesh is" emphatically stiled "a life of faith;" and it accords neither with the general designs of God, nor with the best interests of their own souls, that it should be any other than a life of faith. But in the experience of every christian there are times, (and they who are most exercised to godliness are usually favored with the most frequent returns of them) when the Holy Spirit, suppressing all the motions of corruption, and every thing that could mar their satisfaction, bears them up "by the new and living way," and sets them as it were in the immediate presence of their God. They see him! *they see him as their reconciled Father*, and while the effulgence of his countenance *beams* upon their spirits, their bosoms thrill with the joys of immortality. O, who can suspect that he is involved in darkness while the light of life irradiates his soul! Who can question an interest in his favour when the veil is drawn aside from the everlasting throne, when God himself speaks peace to the conscience and fills the bosom with the ecstasies of heaven! Darkness and doubtings there may have been before, darkness and doubtings may again succeed, but while the Spirit of Jehovah thus bears the soul aloft, darkness and doubtings and faith itself are swallowed up in certitude and bliss.

"Happy is that" man "that is in such a case" as this; "yea, happy is that" man "whose God is Jehovah."

This subject teaches us the necessity of self-examination. He is a poor christian, *he is no christian at all*, who does not bestow some portion of his attention on the ex-

amination of his heart. Has God taken pains to intersperse the distinguishing marks and characters of the new nature throughout almost every page of his bible, and yet will any of his children be utterly negligent in bringing them to bear upon their own hearts? Impossible! How can we conceive that a person should have his affections and hopes centered in the heavenly inheritance, and yet never feel anxious to ascertain his claim! How can *he* be in earnest in preparing for eternity, whose bosom never heaved with strong emotion, whose heart never bounded in unusual palpitation when he heard the characters that fix his state! Jesus himself hath given judgment on this matter, *and we rest* in his decision. "Every one that *doeth evil* hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." O, how many professors have deceived themselves on this point to the ruin of their souls! Contented with a general profession of religion, slightly attending to a trivial round of duties, and comforting themselves with the thought that they were as good as any of their neighbours, they have went on from day to day, and year to year, without so much as once examining the situation of the heart: They knew not what it is to *groan* beneath the burden of the body of death; never suspected the deceitfulness of their hearts, nor gave themselves the trouble to *probe them to the core*. "They knew indeed that they were sinners, miserable sinners; but they could accuse themselves of nothing very faulty,—nothing which might not readily be expected, considering the weakness of our common nature; we are not to look for perfection in this life; they expected all was well; felt a liking to

heaven, and hoped to be admitted;" *but neither knew, nor cared to know*, the foundation of their hope: *and at last*, when their mortal course was run, laid themselves down in deceitful quietude, dreaming of heaven and heaven's happiness, and awoke to the terrors and anguish of the damned! Hearer of the gospel, what is the foundation of *thy* hope? — O, my soul, what is the foundation of *thy* hope! In a little,—in a very little time must thou leave this habitation:—ah, who can tell whether it shall be to shout thy alleluias amid the choirs of heaven, or blaspheme thy Maker in the gulphs below! — O, eternity,—eternity,—eternity! who can be contented with a general hope, when eternity is suspended by the feeble thread! Search, my brother, search and try. Thou can'st never be too sure. If thy soul be buoyed up by a fallacious hope, death and destruction follow in its footsteps. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation; *now* then let us be "assured in whom we have believed," and happiness and heaven are ours.

In the second place: the truth we have been considering gives every one encouragement *to aim* at full assurance. It is too common, even among those who are christians indeed, to refer this precious attainment to a few of God's chosen ones, who stand high in the estimation of his church, without so much as thinking that themselves are privileged to expect it. This is an unhappy mistake. It greatly indisposes for diligent exertion; and takes away much from tranquillity of mind. God debars none of his people from aiming at full assurance. He exhorts, he encourages every one to seek it; and points out to them the way in which it may be obtained. O, why are there so few to obey the heavenly admonition! What heart would

not bound, at the joyful assurance that its peace was made with God! Who dare deny that there is a double sweetness even in temporal enjoyments, when we know them to be the gifts of covenanted love? Or when visited with the rod of chastisement, when God withdraws the light of his countenance and “calls, as in a solemn day, our terrors round about,” who would not rejoice to know that he had indeed a refuge, that the “anchor of his soul” was “steadfast,” and that even these bitter things should terminate in good! And in that awful hour when the emaciated frame lies stretched upon the bed of death, and the spirit is about to return to God who gave it; when the treasures of the worlding, the pomp of kings and the triumphs of the conqueror, dwindle into baubles, *and eternity alone seems glorious*, who so happy as the man that can exclaim with humble but unshaken confidence, “my heart and my flesh faint and fail; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever!!”

Be our souls with the soul of him who “knows that his Redeemer liveth.” And though we may have walked in darkness till this present hour; and even though we may have fed ourselves with deceitful hopes, nor so much as “tasted that the Lord is gracious,” yet *now* let us believe: *now,—now*, let our hearts “lift up their everlasting doors,” and “the king of glory shall come in.”—*Amen.*

SERMON XX.

“Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.”

Rev. iii. 2.

It is noticed by the psalmist as one of the distinguishing glories of the God-head, that while every creature is perpetually changing, he is still the same. Even in cases where sin was never known, stability cannot be. God has created every thing with a capacity for receiving increase; and every exercise of holy faculties affords additional glories to the creature whose faculties are thus employed. The angels of heaven, the spirits of the just, will never arrive at that point beyond which they cannot pass. Every moment shall give new vigor to their faculties, make new discoveries to their intellect, shed abroad new glories on the head, and open new sources of enjoyment to the heart. Till the creature can come up to his Creator, till the finite being shall equal the Infinite One, this constitution of God shall never be broken through; they shall be subjected to unceasing changes; he alone remains the same.

In a world of sinners this principle operates still more clearly and in much more varied forms. The principle of moral stability having disappeared in every shape, they are exposed to innumerable species of change which the guiltless cannot know. And every thing connected with a corrupted race of beings must participate in the rude

shocks they experience on account of sin. Thus we find it in our own world. There is presented before us an ever-shifting scene; and from the solitary spire of grass, to the noblest combination of human beings, nothing can be found exempt from change.

From this fatality the church of the first-born cannot be freed. One age presents us with a little handful faithful to the covenant of their God. In another we see her spread abroad through every land, and proudly towering above the kingdoms of the earth. In a little while corruption seizes upon the mighty mass, and almost every vestige of her existence is destroyed. Again the Spirit is sent forth and she revives. One age is rendered illustrious for piety, knowledge and decorum; a succeeding becomes notorious for ignorance, profligacy and superstition. One while it is accounted indispensable to decency to hail her as the common mother; and anon the million shout against her, and the earth becomes purpled with her childrens blood.

That which applies to the church Catholic, holds equally good when applied to particular sections of the church. Every denomination, every small district of country where the gospel is preached at all; nay, every individual congregation, have their times of adversity and prosperity, their seasons of revival and decline. They are exposed to innumerable changes, and often suffered to go on from bad to worse, till at length the judgments of the Eternal are made manifest, and their memorial is blotted out from under heaven.

Even within the short period of apostolic ministrations this evil was sadly felt. The churches of Corinth and Galatia, founded by the labors of the apostle Paul, were

distinguished for piety, for zeal, for knowledge; yet, long ere the testimony of that man of God was finished, we find party spirit embittering, wild confusion roaring, and soul-destroying errors abounding in a strange degree. That very apostle who had been to them the messenger of grace; that Paul whom they had once "received as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus," was afterwards suspected, misrepresented and reviled.

It is to one of these seasons of decay that our attention is directed in the context. Sardis is acknowledged as one of those churches which the Lord's own right hand had planted. But though it could have been but a very short time since the gospel was introduced, yet it appears her day of prosperity was gone by; she had then but "a name to live," and was threatened with utter desolation in case she did not make use of the means still within her power. What was the result of this message sent to Sardis we do not know. One thing however, is certain; though once known as a church of Jesus Christ, she is known as such no more. Her sanctuary has long been desolate, and her children are at this moment wandering in heathen darkness, and dropping one by one into that world where knowledge cannot profit and where repentance comes too late. That this may never be our case, or the case of them who follow after us, should be among the most anxious wishes of every christian heart. That we may be the better qualified both to discover and eradicate the growing evil, let the following things be attended to.

I. The marks of approaching dissolution in any portion of the christian church.

II. The duty of all those connected with the disordered system.

III. The means that must be resorted to for a recovery.

1. The fact of a church being in a state of decline is the first thing to be ascertained in order to her recovery. To the marks of such a state your attention is first called.

We may begin where society itself commences, in the domestic circle. If in the *families* of the faithful there appear little of the spirit of vital godliness, a church is disordered in her vital parts; unless that thing be remedied, nothing will save her from perdition. The danger is seldom greater than when a profession of religion becomes a very popular thing. If her ministry be popular, if her assemblies be crowded, if their contributions for the support of the gospel be large, we are very apt to conclude that affairs are in a most prosperous state. And no doubt it often is so. But the case is as often otherwise. If this great parade of godliness be laid aside when men retire from the worshipping assembly; if the youth be reared up in ignorance; if *habit*, not *principle*, *fashion*, not *affection*, produce all that is flattering in these appearances, then the forerunners of death pervade the system; and it will not be surprising, if after an age of general profession, the next should be an age of general scepticism. It is in the little circle of the family that we may look for the surest signs of revival and decay. There men commonly act without constraint; and there, especially, is laid in every youthful breast the foundation of his future character. God has generally built up his church out of materials already belonging to her. He seldom puts the seal of his Spirit upon the alien or the outcast; but from the children of those who are his servants he has promised to select, and he ordinarily does select, those who shall bear testimony to his grace, when their fathers are no more. To

these parental instruction and parental correction are the appointed mean of grace. And if parents be negligent of the trust committed to them, if children are suffered to grow up with little cultivation; though nothing else could be faulted in a church—though she had never appeared in so prosperous a state, yet she has in reality little to hope, the springs that fed her are dried up, and she must ere long wither to the root.

2. Contempt of ecclesiastical authority is another and a most alarming evidence of decline. Order and energy are absolutely indispensable to prosperity in every association. But in a body like the church of Christ, where there is so much opposition from every quarter without, and where all depends upon an energy not her own, they cannot be dispensed with for any length of time without the most disastrous consequences. Accordingly the scriptures have marked it as a token of a man's approaching perdition that he despises dominion and speaks evil of dignities. And if it betoken ruin to the individual that he tramples under foot the authority of Zion's King, and speaks evil of the officers acting in his name; what must be the issue when the evil becomes prevalent in a church of Christ. If men will set themselves in opposition to the collected wisdom of our Master's counsellors, convened in his name and aided by his Spirit; if they will bring the officer into disrepute because they dissent from any of his measures; if they flee from censure, and triumph in the thought that the sword cannot be unsheathed against them; if to screen their own conduct they revile their rulers; or to cherish their improper practices disseminate discontent; in one word, if a spirit of disregard or disrespect to the courts of the Lord Jesus once creep in among a people,

we may rest assured that this evil does not stand alone. And unless his grace prevent it by a speedy reformation, nothing can be looked for but that the outrage should be followed with mildew and blasting to the utter extirpation of the name of christian. The curse may operate but slowly; so slowly as to be hardly perceptible; but nevertheless it shall operate till their children's children find that the issue has been sure.

3. Weak and careless ministrations are another token of decay. There is a striking analogy in all the constitutions of God; and with all of them it holds good that where the necessary provision is not made, the end of the constitution, whether natural or moral, is at hand. This analogy the scriptures have stated most clearly as it subsists between the human body and that moral constitution we denominate the church. Each of them are composed of members mutually dependant, and mutually helpful to each other. Each of them depend for their very existence upon the due supply of suitable nourishment. We know that if this be withheld from the body of man, or if it be exchanged for such things as are not well adapted to his constitution, weakness—decay—and finally death, must be the consequence. So too if the church have not her food prepared and administered in a manner adapted to her constitution, she too must perish. Weak, irregular, or careless ministrations will infallibly bring on a decline, though every member should be healthy and every spirit willing. No church can remain in a fixed state, any more than an individual. She must be increasing or diminishing. And if she have not “able workmen that need not to be afraid,” “pastors and teachers after God's own heart, capable of building her up in *knowledge* and in understand-

ing," we want no other evidence of her misery; it is high time she should "strengthen the things which remain," otherwise her desolation cometh.

4. Setting light by the public ordinances of grace; the being contented with small and irregular supplies of them; and a general disposition to forsake them altogether for worldly considerations, and very often for small considerations, is another evidence of *deep* decline.

When things of this sort are found prevailing in a church, to that church the exhortation of the text speaks loudly, "strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die;" and if that exhortation be disregarded, nothing can remain but that the threatening be accomplished, "I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Who are they upon whom the duty recommended is binding? This is the

II. Thing to be considered. It requires no great deal of reflection to discover that this duty is peculiarly incumbent upon the courts of Jesus Christ. They have received special and very extensive powers from him, with the view of their being employed for the good of the body at large; and in a time of decay, which above all others is a time of danger, it becomes them to be alert. The irregularities which mark the progress of corruption are to be noticed and curbed by them; and such measures as appear best calculated to divert the threatened danger should be resorted to with expedition, and persisted in with steadfastness. It is undoubtedly true that the times of decline are above all others times unfavourable to the exercise of church discipline. Contempt and resistance of the authorities are themselves among the most prominent features of decline. The minds of men become blinded;

they will not see their obligation to recognize the authority of Jesus Christ as lodged in the courts of his house; their consciences become seared, they are callous to admonition, impenetrable to rebuke. But these strong facts are never to discourage the Redeemer's officers. The Lord who seconds them is mighty, and his own ordinances he will never suffer to be brought into contempt. He *will* accompany them with the hoped-for success, or he will scar the forehead of the arrogant resister with a mark which he who runs may read.

That time then rarely, if ever, happens, in which the persons in authority may set down and fold their hands in inactivity. That discretion should be employed is unquestionable. That the means of reformation are not to be pushed too rapidly, or applied without discrimination, common prudence must suggest; but still there is a vast difference between prudent regard to time and circumstances and total inactivity. They are not to wait till matters bring themselves to a better disposition for amendment; because the authority lodged in their hands by the alone King of Zion is one great mean appointed for bringing matters to such a disposition. Whatever scriptural measures are at all practicable they are bound to employ; and the means once ascertained, as in the sight of God, or the evil once made clear from the precepts of the word; it must be theirs to act, and leave the consequences, whether good or bad, to the disposer of all events.

2. It is incumbent upon all christians, as individuals, to join in this attempt. The glory of God is the great thing at issue, and every man is bound to do his utmost for the promotion of that glory. Every individual professor is moreover a portion of that great whole we denominate the

church; and as every member of the human body has an interest in the welfare of the whole frame, so every member of the christian community has an interest in the welfare of the body at large; an interest so strong—so tender, that every living soul must feel it; and if any man feels little concerned how matters go abroad, provided it may be well with himself, we venture to pronounce that man a palsied member, “a branch nigh to cursing, whose end is to be burned.” It cannot be otherwise, my brethren; for putting the glory of Messiah out of view, and that is the great object of christian duty and the great theme of christian exultation; yet even laying that aside, still it is a dictate of common—nay, of universal feeling, that all the members of any constitution must suffer or rejoice together. We know that it is so in our bodily constitution; the scriptures have said, and if we be living christians we will feel, that it is so in the extensive constitution of the christian church. But the Redeemer has himself decided the point in language that cannot be mistaken, “he that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.” He that does not exert himself in favor of the cause of Jesus Christ shall be considered and treated as an opposer of his kingdom; and the man that stands carelessly and idly by, while the work of God is to be carried on, shall be viewed not merely as an idle man, but as one who has abused his faculties in attempting to destroy that work. This is the principle of the scriptures upon the subject; no man can be considered a mere spectator; neutrality in this case there cannot be; under the banners of Jesus Christ or around the standard of the enemy every living soul must rank; and that professor whose *works* do not bear witness to the sincerity

of his attachment shall be blasted together with the openly profane. In a time of decay, then, let no man content himself with lamenting the situation of the church of God; let every one arise, let them be alert, let them "strengthen the things which remain, and are ready to die," for the highest authority has said it, "he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." But what measures may be taken for the restoration of prosperity in any portion of the kingdom of Christ? This is the

III. Thing to be considered. The cure should be attempted where the evil first makes its appearance in any considerable degree, viz:

In the families of them that rank with the Redeemer's people. Let a stop be put to that shameful and ruinous negligence about the religious education of children, which ordinarily marks such periods of decline. Let christian parents fulfill their baptismal engagements, by rearing up their little ones in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is too generally imagined by parents that if they lead their children the common round of catechetical exercises, they have done all their duty; and so averse are they even to this exercise that it is for the most part referred to others, or entirely neglected. And what is the excuse! Why they cannot get a school-teacher who will consent to bear this burden; or they have paid their clergyman to do it, and he neglects his duty. And because the teacher will not, and the pastor perhaps cannot, the infatuated parents set them down contented; and commit the eternal interests of their children to the winds!! Be it remembered, that the God of all flesh has constituted the *parent*, not the teacher or the pastor, the guardian of little ones; and the man who would give over to another's care,

that instruction of his child upon which most probably depends the unalterable issues of its fate, betrays a cold-blooded cruelty which might make a savage blush. Any man *would* blush to trump up such a miserable excuse about a thing which involved the future fortunes of his children, or even a small portion of their fortunes, for the present life; no man would think of entrusting to a stranger the temporal interests of his little ones, provided he could attend to them himself; and he must be a monster, not a man, who would plead as an excuse for negligence, that he could get no one to do it for him. But in the concerns of immortality the plea is good!

Horrible indeed must be the situation of that family where such negligence pervades the course of parental duty; dark beyond description the prospects of that church in which such negligence is common.

Even admitting that all the common round of catechetical instruction were attended to, the duty is not half accomplished. Nothing may be said against many of those systems of instruction put into the hands of children. In their own place they are very good; and too much use can hardly be made of them. But they must be *used*, not *abused*. They are much better suited to give assistance to the parent in conveying sound instruction to the child, than to be put into the hands of children merely that they may commit the words to memory. These instructions are designed of God as means of grace to little ones; and it is only when they are made to understand the things they learn; and when parents labour to impress them upon the heart as well as imprint them upon the memory; that the blessing can be rationally expected. This, it is evident, is a work that cannot be transferred to other per-

sons, or be taken up merely as occasion offers. It must be the business of every day; and, as far as circumstances admit, of every portion of the day. Say we these things of our own self; or saith not the scripture also the same thing? "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."—"Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. vi. 6, 7. & xi. 18, 19.

Is this any thing like the miserable procedure often witnessed in the church of God? Is it any wonder, when the ordinances of Jesus Christ are so wantonly and cruelly neglected, that children grow up shamefully ignorant of every thing, but the mere form of words in which their catechisms have been framed. Is it the church or is it the God of salvation that is guilty of unfaithfulness, when the heads of the old men are laid beneath the clod, and there are none found to occupy their room? God is unchangeable, he cannot deny himself; he has said that "though folly be bound up in the heart of a child, yet the rod of correction shall drive it far away;" he has declared that if a "child be trained up in the way that he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it." But when parents correct with passion, instead of prayer for God's promised blessing; when they content themselves with the common

meager round of instruction, or with miserable excuses for affording none at all, what can be expected but that their charge should perish, and the perdition of the child be laid to the parent's hands!

It will never be so when a reviving comes in any church of God. Every house will be a little church; every parent a teacher of righteousness; every babe will learn to lisp and to love the name of Jesus; and thus shall streams issue forth from every family that will in after times make glad the city of our God.

2. Another great mean of "strengthening the things which remain," is the taking proper notice of those who are past the period of childish instruction. Every one who descends from christian parents, is, by the very fact of that descent, a member of the christian church. In the ordinance of baptism that relationship is not created, but formally recognized. And, therefore, the church of Christ is in duty bound to see that every baptized adult take the yoke upon him. It is too common for young people to imagine that they have no connexion with the church of God, unless they be received into full communion. And this error has been too long sanctioned by the remissness of church courts. Hence immoralities, gross immoralities, are often found in every christian family that are suffered to pass unnoticed; and legions of them who owe their testimony to the King of Zion, are permitted to stand idly by. This must not be the case, if a people would rise from their state of decay, and trim again their expiring lamp. The exhortations—the warnings—the reproofs of the Master's officers, should be prudently administered; but administered with firmness; and if every milder method failed, then there can be nothing left, but to cut them

off from their relation to the church of God. No doubt procedures of this kind would excite much animosity, and a great deal more complaint. But it is the duty of those who are entrusted with authority from Jesus Christ, to pursue the track which his wisdom has marked out, and leave the results to him. This, be it remembered, is his ordinance, and it was designed for the welfare, not the destruction, of his kingdom; and how far it is calculated to ensure beneficial effects he is the better judge. No man can tell how much interest, such a procedure, once or twice attempted, would excite among the rising generation; none can calculate how highly they might be led to value privileges now not thought of; or with what fondness they would be prone to cherish them. And something like this must take place; the authority of the Redeemer must be recognized; his ordinances must be honored, if ever we expect our hearts to be gladdened with a reviving time in the midst of trouble. And this was the case in the days of the blessed reformation. A spirit of inquiry, of devotion, prevailed eminently among the young; and the happy consequences reached down for many generations.

3. The renovation of the decayed ministrations of the church is another mean of "strengthening the things which remain." As is the ministry such will be the church, is an adage that *always* holds good. Individual men have sometimes been reared up among a corrupted priesthood, or a corrupted ministry, for the purpose of denouncing God's judgments and hardening the hearts of men; but it never yet was found that a decayed order of teachers were set over a prosperous people; or that when the ministrations of the former were lively and faithful and instruc-

tive, the church remained in a languishing condition. On the contrary, it is a uniform rule, that when a death-like stupor creeps over the churches of Christ, it is in the body of her ministry that the evil is first discernible; and when a time of reviving comes, it is in the ministry that the glorious work commences.

It was by men fervent in spirit, indefatigable in labour, powerful in word, that the gospel was first preached with such astonishing success. It was the gradual decline of ministerial talent and preparation that marked the first steps of papal incursion. It was a cloud of most learned and brilliant and powerful witnesses, that stood up in the morning of the glorious reformation; and from that happy day to this, the deterioration of the ministerial character has gone before the decline of every church. And it must be so. God usually apportions means to ends. He never would prepare a powerful engine without intending adequate results; and when working in the use of means at all, he rarely, if ever, employs weak ones for the production of great effects.

Would any church then, that finds herself in a state of decline, set about "strengthening the things which remain?" Let her spare no pains, let her stick at no cost, for the preparation of a ministry able "rightly to divide the word of truth." Though she cannot seal them with the Holy Spirit; yet her God has promised to do that for her. Meanwhile it is hers to furnish such means of preparation, to afford such opportunities of bringing forward and exerting every latent spark of genius, as shall, when duly employed and owned of Zion's King, prove in his hand a most tremendous weapon against the powers of darkness, and a spring of ever-varying—ever-increasing comforts to them that hear in faith.

This was the method employed in the reformation from popery, already adverted to more than once. The ablest men were selected as instructors of the rising ministry; the most liberal provision was made that the case required for affording them every advantage; and to these newly founded seminaries, the youth flocked from all parts of christianized Europe. And this, or something like it, must be the method employed, if any church would revive her decaying interests, and display successfully a banner for the truth.

4. In the last place. Let her be careful that the efforts of her ministry do not be lost by being too widely scattered. God never made any thing to grow without appropriate cultivation; and it is vain to expect it in the church of God, more than in any other thing. The spiritual, as well as animal structure, must be made to flourish by receiving day by day its proper nourishment. And if the little that will only suffice an individual body be expended upon a considerable number; all must languish; and eventually all must die. It is a zeal without knowledge, that attempts to scatter ministerial labors. And such a misguided zeal as has produced awful havoc in the church of God. But it is not only a violation of God's constitutions; it is a direct impeachment of his wisdom. In all the order of his house, as delivered to us in the scriptures, there is not a syllable to countenance the measure; and how dare any church expect to prosper in the use of means which her Master never sanctioned?

If then she would "strengthen the things which remain," let her put a stop to the wanton lavishing of her little strength. Let her cultivate no more than she can do in compliance with the regulations of her head. Let pro-

fessors be taught that her ministry has more important work than going after stragglers to the utmost ends of the earth; let her members be accustomed to steady as well as faithful ministrations; and, for this purpose, let it be made the first, not the last, concern of all who would hear the gospel, to present their willing and becoming offerings in the temple of the Lord of Hosts. If any church walk by this rule, she shall again revive; for God has promised to revive her: but if cowardice in her officers, or niggardliness in her members, preclude the happy renovation of her order; there is no alternative, she must perish in her blood.

Amen.

SERMON XXI.

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; these things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David; he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and has kept my word, and hast not denied my name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie;) behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” · Rev. iii. 7—13.

NEXT^d o the emotion excited by that plaudit, “well done good and faithful servant,” with which the redeemed of God are hailed, at the moment when the spirit, just freed

from the conflicts and sorrows of the world, stands before the Father's throne, — next to the thrilling emotions of that spirit, must be the feelings of the man, to whom the voice of the Eternal testifies even on this side the grave, that the labours of his love are accepted at his hands. My brethren, it is a blessedness as exalted as it is rare. The prophets of the Lord who bore his messages to the sons of men, describing what they were, as well as what they ought to be, have long since left the world. The Redeemer himself revisits the earth no more, till that day when the heavens shall depart. To the words of this prophecy nothing can be added declarative of the faith or fortunes of his people. We then can never expect that honor which was conferred upon this favoured church—our fears cannot be alarmed, nor our diligence excited, by such messages as were received by her sister churches. But though it can never be our happiness to receive such marked expressions of the presence and attentions of him who walks amidst his churches; yet let us not forget that he who observed and so accurately depicted the state of these churches, is as really present with us as he was with them; marks just as scrupulously our faith and our conduct; and will proclaim it at that day, when reformation will be impracticable, and regret come too late. Let us then remember that though the prophets and the fathers have long since left the earth, yet the testimony they delivered, they have left behind; the faults which dashed the prosperity of some, and the virtues which obtained an everlasting memorial for others, are still on record; the rule of judgment is common to us both; our acceptance or rejection may be, therefore, read in theirs. It is under this view of things that we would have you this day direct your attention to the passage that has been read.

Philadelphia was a city of Lydia, one of the provinces of Asia Minor. It was a place not very populous, nor of great consideration, being placed under the jurisdiction of Sardis, the principal city of that province. We have no certain accounts at what time the gospel was planted here; but as it lay far within the range of apostolic labours, and was not remote from some other places in which we know that the apostles planted churches as early as the year fifty-six, the probability is that Philadelphia received the gospel about, or, at farthest, not long after that time. It was forty-two years from that date to the persecution of Domitian, during which John was banished to Patmos, where this revelation was made to him. During this period the various churches had had time to settle, and form their various characters. And according to their real characters, the Redeemer selects his symbols, under which he describes himself to them. Thus, for example, to the church of Ephesus, the first addressed, which was like to fall away from its former love and devotedness to him, he describes himself by symbols well calculated to rouse her. "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; these things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." Rev. ii. 1.—Her ministry, called stars, are in his hand, and he can deal with her in that respect as he pleases. "He walks amid the candlesticks," the churches; and her backsliding could not be concealed from him. To the church of Pergamos, which was in danger of being corrupted, by the false doctrines and dangerous practices of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes, as "he that hath the sharp two-edged sword," a symbol of the word of God, which is the great instrument appointed for hewing down error, and giving

success to his church in her conflicts with the world. So in this letter to the church of Philadelphia, he assumes a character correspondent to her case, and to the promises he makes. We shall see this correspondence more clearly when we come to the character the Redeemer gives her.

“Thus saith he that is holy, he that is true,” &c. The primary idea of holiness is *devoted, or set apart, to the service of God*. Thence it comes to signify purity; because purity is an indispensable prerequisite in them whose service is accepted by the holy God. In both these senses Jesus Christ was holy, for even he, says an apostle, “pleas- ed not himself,” but came into the world to perform his Father’s pleasure, and accounted it more than his meet and drink to do his Father’s will. In this sense he was holy, or devoted to God. He was also pure; for, say the scriptures, “he did no sin, and in his lips was found no guile.” Thus then he was well qualified to give countenance and encouragement to this people, whom he afterwards describes as being likewise devoted, and faithful, and pure. It was no small consolation given them to describe himself such as they were. Because they were such, he makes them a great and most important promise. And, as an assurance that this promise should not fail of its accomplishment, he describes himself as “he that is true,” whose professions are not deceitful, nor his predictions without foundation. But as the prediction related to something extremely im- probable; and in fact to human sense impossible to be per- formed, considering what would be the future circumstan- ces of that part of the world, he not only tells them that he is true—faithful to his promises,—but likewise that he was possessed of all necessary authority and adequate

power. It is he "who hath the key of David, who openeth and none shutteth, and shutteth and none openeth." This symbol, *having the key of David*, is borrowed from a prophecy of Christ, Isaiah xxii. 22.

The key is an ancient and well known symbol of authority. Aeschylus, in one of his compositions, calls the priestess of Juno her key-bearer. This mark of office was borne by the Greeks upon their shoulder. And, in allusion to the key as the ensign of power, the unlimited extent of that power is expressed with great clearness, by having the sole and exclusive authority to open and shut. The Redeemer's symbol is called *the key of David*, because he is known in the scriptures as of the house of David. David was his progenitor according to the flesh; David was exalted to the head of the kingdom of Israel, and therefore is a well known type of Jesus, the head of all the Israel of God; and it is under this view that Jesus Christ is said to inherit the throne of his father David. By the key of David, then, is meant supreme authority in the church of the living God. I, says Jesus to the church of the Philadelphians, I have this power; I open, none can shut, I shut, none can open; I therefore can dispense the privileges of the church and blessings of salvation to your children's children in the worst of times.

It is thus the Redeemer describes himself to them. He was holy; devoted to God's service and pure in person: He therefore knew how to appreciate and reward their purity and devotedness. He was faithful, and therefore would not forget the promise he was about to make them. He had the key of David, all authority and power in his hands, and therefore could perform it in despite of every difficulty and opposition, which he foresaw must be encountered.

Having thus introduced himself, he proceeds to delineate the present state of that church, and thence by way of promise to predict her future fortunes: "I know thy works." Works is a word generally used in this book, when employed in a good sense, to denote christian activity in the Redeemer's cause, and for the comfort and edification of his people. We are not told particularly how Philadelphia had employed herself; but we know very well what was the general tone of the christian spirit in that age; and it is clear that Philadelphia must have stood in the foremost ranks of the active and the devoted, otherwise she could not have obtained this distinguished notice; much less the reward still more distinguished, as having been given to her alone of all the Asiatic churches. We have only to consider, then, what was the general character of the times, and we shall see what Philadelphia, supereminently distinguished, must necessarily have been. In that age the force of the apostle's words, "no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself," &c. was felt and acknowledged by all. Hence there was no want of men to uphold and spread the gospel of Jesus Christ among the nations. Every church was furnished with multitudes disposed to "leave father and mother and houses and lands, to spread the gospel of Christ." And hence we find that in a very few years it was dispersed through all the civilized and no small portion of the barbarous world. There was no want of means to promote this great design. No want of means to supply the necessities of persecuted christians, despoiled of property and driven from their homes. No want of any thing which could in any measure tend to forward the knowledge of the faith of Christ, or to promote the glory of his name. Every person was at the disposal of the

church, and every heart and every purse was open to furnish the necessary means. These were the labours of christian love, these the fruits of the faith of Jesus, these the results of that hope of immortality which, drawn from the gospel of the grace of God, had illumined the gloom of the grave. And in these "*works*" for the promotion of the common cause, Philadelphia, though a place of no great size, and, comparatively speaking, no great wealth, had acted a conspicuous part. Because thou hast done this, says the Redeemer, because thou hast labored to promote my cause, and to extend to others the benefits of my gospel, this gospel shall not be taken away from thee. This is his meaning when he says, "behold I have set before thee an open door and none can shut it." We have already heard him describe himself as having "*the key of David*," the symbol of supreme authority in the church of God. So that by opening the door with this key, and causing it to stand open by permitting none to shut, he evidently means, that he will continue his church among them, so that they shall always have free access to its ordinances, in despite of all attempts to hinder them. We shall just now see what attempts were afterwards made to unchurch that people, and how, after all the other Asiatic churches had long perished utterly, in Philadelphia he still preserved the ordinances of his grace.

The Redeemer adds some fresh touches to this discription, which tend to produce a much more finished picture. "Thou hast a little strength, thou hast kept my word, thou hast not denied my name." We have already remarked that Philadelphia was a place of no great size or note. Her ability, therefore, for those labors of love could not be very great. Perhaps also her advances in

knowledge and in grace may have been comparatively small. But she did not faint under the sense of her weakness; she did not refuse to do any thing, because she had not the means of doing much. On the contrary, says her Lord, thou has kept my word. Thou hast kept that first and great commandment, the loving the Lord thy God; and thou hast manifested thy tender and respectful love of him—by persevering and diligent compliance with the duties imposed upon thee. Thou hast done more than using exertions for the promotion of my kingdom; “thou hast not denied my name.” Denying the name of Jesus is directly opposed to that which in one of the gospels he calls confessing him before men. In other words, it is the refusal to make open profession of the religion of Jesus, through the fear of persecution, or reproaches, or sneers, or from any other cause. The particular circumstances under which Philadelphia persisted in making her good confession, are more fully adverted to in the following verse, “because thou hast kept the word of my patience;” it is a Hebrew mode of expressing adherence to any cause in the face of such sufferings as require much patience. The allusion is obviously to the persecution of Domitian, which was then raging against the christians throughout the Roman world. It was by this monster that John was banished into Patmos. And from Patmos he wrote this epistle to the church of Philadelphia. Though she then had but little strength, no adequate means of defending herself against the blood-hounds let loose by the emperor of Rome, yet she did not faint—she clave fast to her integrity—she preferred suffering to sinning, and would not deny her Lord. *And therefore*, says her kind and condescending Saviour, thou shalt not lose the labour of thy love. “Be-

hold I will make them of the synagogue of satan, that say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie;—behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet," &c. &c. This is obviously a promise to Philadelphia, that at some future day she should triumph over some enemies, and that to those enemies, whoever they might be, God would so signally manifest his favor for that church and city, as to extort from them a confession that he loved it. But more particularly, bear in mind that the whole of this prophecy is symbolical; we have not the real names of things given us, but something that will serve as a representative of the thing. These enemies are called a synagogue—a synagogue of satan. Persons calling themselves Jews, but falsely, for, says our Lord, they "*are not.*" All these names are of course symbolical—designed to represent something else, to which they bear some kind of analogy. Synagogues were places of worship among the Jews, the only true worshippers of the true God; and therefore furnish a fit emblem of a church professing to worship the true God. These enemies, says the Redeemer, shall be such a synagogue, a people opposed to idols, as were the Jews of old; and professing like them to worship none but God. They will not however be a church of God—but a synagogue of satan. A church set up by the devices of the devil for the purpose of promoting his impious designs against God and his Messiah. —. They are further described as persons calling themselves Jews. As a synagogue of Jews is a symbol of a true church of God, so the term Jew is an apt emblem of a true worshipper of God. Of one who not only professes to address the true object of worship, but also to worship him according to the divine appointment; as did the Jews of old, all whose law and temple service were ordained by God. These enemies then shall not only be a

church professing to worship the one true God, but also professing to worship in a way of his own appointment. But they lie, says the Redeemer, they are not Jews, not worshippers of the true God, in spirit and in truth, and in his own appointed way. They are the synagogue of satan, professors of a religion set up and promoted by the devices of the devil. Therefore, they shall manifest who is their father, by venting their malignity on thee. But, says he, because thou hast been faithful, I will protect, I will fight for thee. "Behold I will cause them to come and worship before thy feet; and they shall know that I have loved thee." The general idea of the word rendered worship, is an expression of deference and respect; and is employed as well to denote the forms of courtesy used towards superiors among men, as adoration toward God. Our English word worship was formerly thus used; so that to do a man worship, and to do him reverence, were perfectly synonymous with our mode of expression when we talk of shewing respect. Thus respectful—thus submissive, will I make thy enemies shew themselves to thee. Though in esteeming themselves a synagogue of Jews, true worshippers of the true God; and by consequence accounting thy religion false; yet I will, in spite of all their power, and in spite of all their prejudices, bring down their haughty looks, and make them confess that I have loved thee.

This mysterious enemy to the church of Philadelphia is more decidedly pointed out in the succeeding verse. He had before pointed it out as a church professing to worship the true God in contradistinction from idols, as Jews had formerly done; as a church likewise professing to model its worship by a divine rule, as the Jewish synagogues did.

The time of its appearance is more distinctly marked in the following words; when again adverting to her patient fidelity in the face of persecutions he says, "because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation," &c. The world, and the earth, are both well known as expressions commonly used in scripture to designate the whole Roman empire, which in those days embraced almost all the civilized nations of the earth. The evangelist Luke speaks of Augustus Cæsar's decree to tax the whole world; and this book speaks in 17th chapter of the city of Rome, as the great city, seated on seven hills, which reigns over the kings i. e. kingdoms of the earth. This mode of speaking of the Roman empire was common in those days. Nothing is more common than to meet with Roman authors who call it the Roman world, the empire of the world, the empire "*of the whole globe.*" Upon the whole Roman empire, then, there was a temptation to come, which would try them that should dwell on the earth, to manifest who were true lovers of the true religion, and who would forsake it under the influence of that temptation, and so estrange themselves from the true church of God. But, says he that is holy—he that is true—he that hath the key of David, and opens his church to whom he pleases; *thee* I will keep from the hour of that temptation. Thou hast had a high value for the true religion; thou hast done much to extend the blessing to those who had it not; to thine own children therefore this blessing shall be preserved. Temptations to embrace a false religion shall never overcome them; nor shall the votaries of error, while blotting out from under heaven all traces of other churches, be able to take my ordinances away from thee,

This, my brethren, was the blessing promised to the faithful Philadelphians. Now let us mark how accurately it was fulfilled. A. D. 606 the foundation of the pope's authority in Europe was laid by the concessions of Phocas, emperor of the French; and A. D. 622, sixteen years after, Mohammed fled from Mecca to Medina, where he first began successfully to promulge his new religion. Need you be told that Islamism from that moment began to overrun the east, and popery the west, so that between these two the whole Roman empire continued for ages enveloped in the blackness of darkness; and that much of it remains so still. Here then was that temptation of which the Redeemer speaks, as about to come on the whole empire, to try them that dwelt on the earth. And the greater part of the following prophecy relates to the conflicts of God's people with these two religions, especially the papal, until that day, now no great way off, when he will destroy them and their abettors by the power of his arm, and bring forth judgment unto victory. But it was with the eastern superstition that Philadelphia had to do. The Mahomedans were the pretended Jews, worshippers of the true God and enemies to idols; the Mahomedans were the synagogue of satan, professing to be governed by a pretended revelation, as the Jewish synagogues were by the law of Moses; and it was against them that she should rear her banners, and over them that Jesus Jehovah would give an ample triumph. And she did rear her banners against the followers of Mohammed. And though a little city, having but little strength, she did obtain her triumph. While the Saracens, and afterwards their conquerors the Turks, deluged all those parts of Asia with blood, and with the sword in the one hand and koran in the other,

compelled all men to embrace the new religion, and left not a vestige of the church of Christ, this little city still held out against them; and was blessed with visible, almost miraculous, success. So much so that the Turks themselves were obliged to pay homage to her virtues, and to confess that Almighty God must have been her protector. In testimony of this conviction, they called the city Allah Skeyr, i. e. the City of God. This the memorial which her enemies have written, and to her everlasting honor, and their confusion, the name that they gave her, and the religion of Jesus, continue with her still. Yes, my brethren, during all the reign of darkness and ravages of war, this city of God has stood—stood as a rock in the midst of the sea, exposed to all the buffeting of billows, but fixed immovable as the throne of him who placed it; stood far from every other church—far from all the advantages of their aid and counsel—stood amid the desolations which blotted out from under heaven the memorial of her sister churches—stood through the favor of that Almighty Jesus who openeth and none can shut.

To thy name be the glory, thou condescending Saviour; for mercy and faithfulness are thine.

II. To this good and gracious promise, so minutely and gloriously fulfilled, the Redeemer adds appropriate cautions. “Behold I come quickly, hold fast that thou hast, that none may take thy crown.” Compared with the greatness of their reward, and the duration of eternity through which they should enjoy it, the day of judgment, however remote it seem to human apprehension, may be said to be just at hand; but besides this, the period of human life is at best but very short, and when it brings about those means which are to disunite the individual believer

from his clay, and usher him into the presence of his God, the Redeemer may be said to come himself for that purpose, in the same sense that he called his visitation on Jerusalem by means of the Roman armies, his own coming to execute the threatnings. This assurance of their own speedy dissolution, and the certain and not very remote approach of the great day of God, are urged with great fitness as motives to persevere in the course in which they had commenced, and for which they are so highly and deservedly applauded. But this further reason is given as an additional spur to diligence and motive for patience; it was only by persevering that they could attain to the end of their faith, their final and complete salvation. This the Redeemer calls a crown, and the apostle Paul a crown of life; because a crown is an emblem of dominion, as well as of the highest exaltation; and while the redeemed of God are exalted to the complete possession of all that we call life, in the moral, the intellectual, and, after the resurrection, even the outward man; they are likewise described in scripture, as kings and priests unto God, to whom the Redeemer there appoints a throne, even as his Father hath appointed unto him. This crown of immortality and life, says Jesus, shall be yours provided you persevere. Let no one rob you of it, by decoying you from me; not men by all their persecutions, not the world by all its gilded poisons, not the arch enemy by all his delusions and temptations. All these are now besetting, and most of them will continue through life to beset you. But remember—"him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God," &c. "He that hath an ear, let him hear," &c. This is the common form in which all these seven epistles are concluded. First by giving some

promise best adapted to rouse and encourage the particular church addressed; and then uniformly adding that voice of solemn warning.

The promise here made is admirably adapted to the circumstances and prospects of this church. Him that overcometh, that obtains victory over the allurements of earth and the hosts of hell, by faithful and patient adherence to the cause of God, and faith of Jesus Christ, him will he make a pillar in the temple of his God, and he shall go no more out. It cannot have escaped the notice of any of you who are at all conversant with the scriptures, that believers are every where so called, both in their individual capacity, and especially as all forming one complete whole, in which sense they are called by Peter, "living stones built up into a spiritual house;" and it is in reference to this emblem of the church that the Redeemer is so often called "a corner stone"—"the head of the corner." By being made a pillar in this temple, then, which consists of the whole church, is evidently meant, occupying a very distinguished place among believers both in this world and the world to come; as a pillar was a most important part in ancient buildings, both for use and ornament. And when thus honored with this distinction, "he shall go no more out," never be cut off from the privileges and blessings of the church of God. A promise, as we have seen, most remarkably fulfilled to this people, in the continuance of their privileges, during all the rage and darkness and prevalency of Mohammedanism; and yet more completely and gloriously accomplished in the successive transplantation of her favored members to the church above.

"Upon this pillar," says the Redeemer, "I will write the name of my God," &c. Inscriptions on pillars are usually

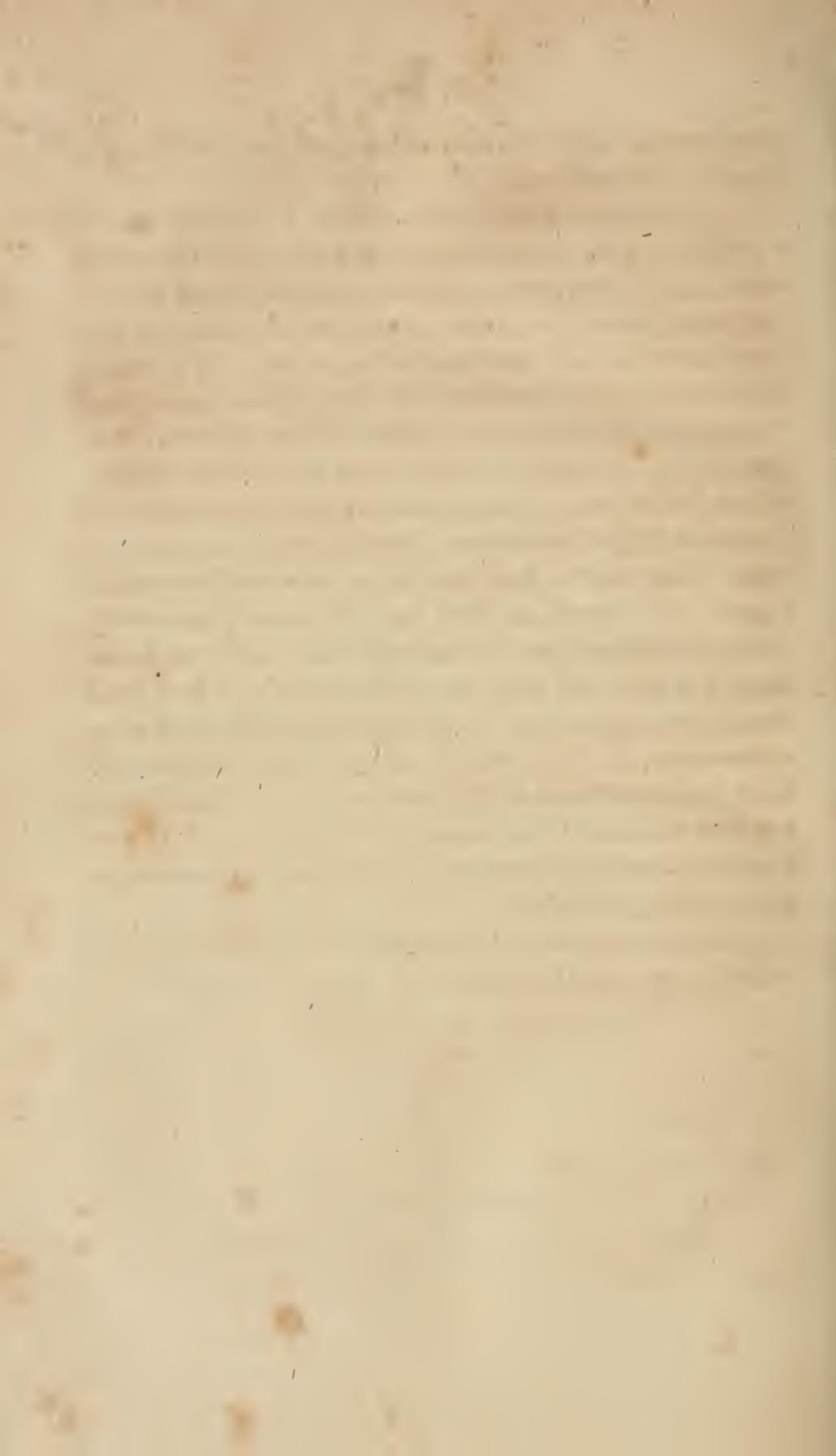
employed to perpetuate the memory of remarkable persons and events. Thus Absalom raised for himself a pillar, to perpetuate his memory, because he had no children. By writing then on him as a pillar in the temple of God, the name of God himself, is meant an open and perpetual acknowledgment that the person thus distinguished, is a true servant of the living God, whose labors are had in remembrance and in honor. By the additional inscription, "the name of the city of my God," &c. which is a common and a well known appellation of the millennial church, by this is meant an acknowledgment of their service, particularly as instrumental in bringing about that happy state of things. For unless some were faithful in all preceding ages, truth must perish, and the millennium never come. They who are faithful in the preceding period of conflict and of darkness, shall be honored as pillars of that important edifice thus brought to its utmost consummation. Therefore, also, says Jesus, I will inscribe on them "my new name;" that name given him in this book of revelations, "King of kings and Lord of lords." Because in that most happy period all the kings and governors of the earth shall acknowledge him supreme, and administer in his name over the people they rule. In bringing about this most desirable revolution in sentiment and manners, they who are now on the alert shall then be owned and distinguished as co-workers with himself. And the saints of the millennium, who shall enjoy the happy reign of righteousness and peace, will be taught to revere the memory of those fathers, who occupied their place in less auspicious days, and handed down the boon from age to age, under consecration of their labors and their blood.

Thus then shall the inscription be on every individual

who engages in this warfare, and, persevering to the end, is crowned with victory.

But in its application to this church, considered as one whole, it may have an additional and still more important meaning. There is no probability that the gospel will ever perish from her. For one thousand years she has stood alone in that quarter of the world. The rage of Musselmen has so far abated, that they now admit without difficulty the profession of christianity among them. Who then can say but that this little spark will still be cherished on the bosom of that ocean; till at length, when the promised Spirit descends to illumine and reform the nations of the earth, and rear up a universally-spreading church, this spark, so long and wondrously preserved, shall be blown up into a living and widely-diffusing flame, imparting light and vigor to the benumbed and benighted multitudes around her! The suggestion, so far from being extravagant, is both natural and probable; and thus indeed shall the nations of the earth behold in Philadelphia a massy column of the church triumphant; and on her broad base indelibly inscribed the insignia and the triumphs of the "King of kings."

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches!!"—*Amen.*





A

DISCOURSE

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

REV'D. JAMES M'CHORD;

DELIVERED IN MARKET-STREET CHURCH,

Lexington, Ky. Sabbath, 13th August, 1820.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

*THE ADDRESS DELIVERED AT HIS INTER-
MENT.*

BY ROBERT H. BISHOP, A. M.

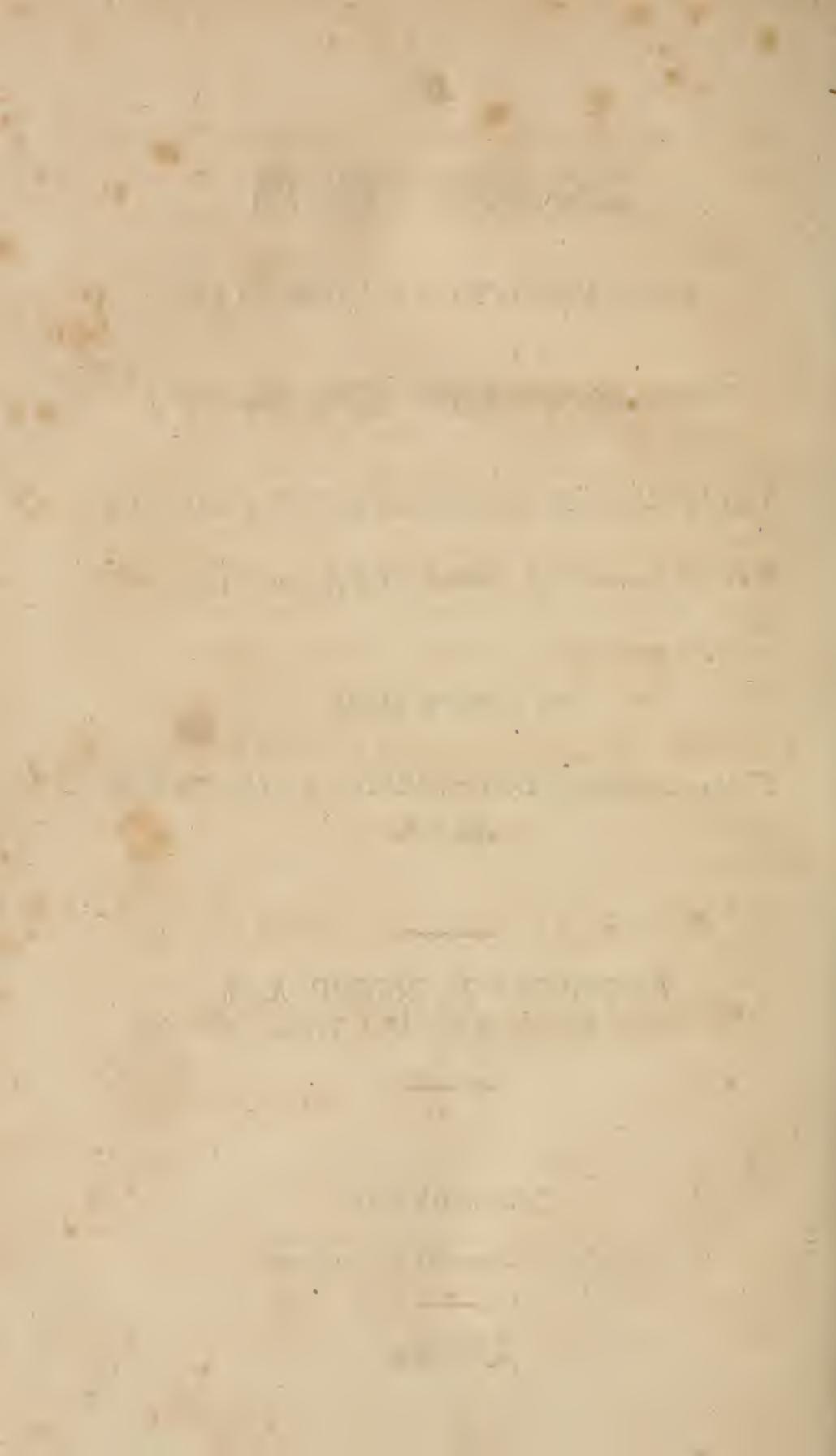
Prof. of Nat. Philosophy and Hist. Trans. University.

LEXINGTON:

PRINTED BY THOMAS T. SKILLMAN.

1821,

50



TO

THE MEMBERS AND PEWHOLDERS

OF

MARKET-STREET CHURCH, LEXINGTON, KY.

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY & RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED,

BY THEIR FRIEND AND SERVANT

IN THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS.

THE AUTHOR.

THE HISTORY OF THE

1777

THE HISTORY OF THE

A DISCOURSE.

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

1 Cor. v. 1.

That we are mortal, and that we are soon, very soon, to enter the eternal world, is a truth which no individual of our race has the hardihood to deny. The truth may have no practical influence upon either the heart or the life, yet every man admits it, and every man also admits that it is a truth of the last importance. A truth with which he ought never to trifle—no not for a moment.

We are met here this morning from different quarters, and of different ages, and we are all met in one assembly for the first, and for the last time, on this side eternity. We were never all assembled before in any one place, and we will never again all meet in any other place till with our eyes we shall see the dead small and great stand before God.

It is our wisdom, not our folly, to have this great and important fact frequently brought home to our hearts as well as to our understandings. We are soon to close our eyes forever upon all the beauties of this lower world.—We must soon give up to other owners these profitable farms, and these elegant and commodious dwellings, and these extensive commercial speculations. We must soon part with all these useful and agreeable companions—and these bodies of ours, so active and so curiously organized, are soon to be laid in the dust. And where will the soul, the better part, then be—? Shall it wing its way into the regions of bliss—to the mansions in the skies—and make one

of the innumerable company who drink of everlasting pleasures—? or shall it descend to the blackness and darkness of eternal death—?

Among those wise men who, by constantly keeping the fact of their mortality before them, have made this fact subservient to the noblest of purposes, the apostle Paul holds a distinguished place. He habitually remembered that he was mortal—and therefore did not consider any of the sufferings to which he was exposed in the present life, as of any great account. “They were but light afflictions, and only for a moment. The sufferings of the present life were not worthy to be compared with the glory which was to be revealed.” He was mortal—his bodily frame was soon to be dissolved—but in this dissolution he was not to be the loser. Suppose I am killed—suppose my body crushed in the service of my master! What then! “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Should the worst come to the worst—the worst which can possibly happen is intimately connected with the very best thing which God has to bestow. The worst that the wicked can do to a faithful servant of our Lord, is to send him to heaven. In the very worst possible case the faithful servant of our Lord has the advantage, as much as a building of God is beyond a mere tabernacle, or an heavenly house is better than an earthly, or that which is eternal is better than that which may be dissolved.

These bodies of ours are fearfully and wonderfully made. The muscular arm—the sparkling eye—the expressive countenance—the nimble limb—all proclaim their divine workmanship. But the whole structure is only temporary. We dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust; and we are crushed sooner than the moth.

Ever since sin came into the world this beautiful and apparently strong fabric has been in its best state crazy and tottering, and the inhabitant has frequently much to do to keep it in only tolerable repair. It must be daily propped by food. It must be fenced by raiment from the injuries of the weather, the very changes of which sensibly effect it—and the aid of the physician, with the experience of a thousand years, must frequently be called in. And yet after all, there is no keeping of it standing beyond a small number of years. If outward troubles, like so many storms, do not overturn it—if it is not crushed by the innumerable accidents of the moment—it is but for some provision to miss its proper channel, or a few drops of blood to run out of their proper vessel—it is but for some string to crack by frequent use, or some small passage to be choaked up, or some small portion of the usual food not to produce the usual effect—and it falls all at once. The dust returns to the dust as it was, and from the most lovely and enchanting object, it is in a few hours transformed into the vilest and most loathsome.

Among the many causes which produce the dissolution of the fair and stately building—the action of the mind,—the action of the inhabitant upon the clay tenement, is none of the least. We have all felt the effects of this action.—Grief preys upon the animal spirits, makes us forget our daily and necessary food, and in a few days or months crushes the whole frame. Intense application of any kind, gives an unnatural impulse to the animal fluids, raises the pulse to the rapidity of fever, and by beating and beating on every fibre, soon leaves the whole system a wreck. And if to these are added great anxiety for the fate of some favourite object, and a continual vibration betwixt hope and fear, betwixt the highest joys and the most pungent sorrows, the strongest constitution with which ever mortal

was endowed, unless supported by some counteracting principles, will not last long.

And of all the occupations of man, the ministerial office, when sufficiently understood, and entered upon with becoming spirit, produces the greatest action of the mind upon the clay tabernacle. Here there is the most intense application, for the whole soul is engaged. And here the labour is of such a kind, that all the varieties of hopes and fears—of joys and sorrows, are continually operating upon the man. And to this point we would particularly turn your attention at this time. And in illustrating it, we shall simply glance at a few obvious facts—facts so obvious that it will require very little stretch of thought to make the suitable application.

Christian friends and fellow mortals,—we watch for souls, each of whom is of more value than a world—we watch for those souls for whom the Son of God laid down his life. And we watch for those souls, as those who are to give an account; and who are to account for the loss of souls, at the peril of the loss of their own souls.

We are the representatives or agents of Jehovah in his great work of reconciling the world to himself. We are entrusted in a great measure with the execution of the most glorious of all God's plans—the plan to which all his other works of creation and providence are made subservient.

The final result of our labours can never in any case be a matter of indifference. It is in every case either a soul saved, or a soul lost. To one we are the saviour of death unto death, and to the other saviour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? And who is there, who being daily and hourly impressed with a sense of this vast responsibility, has not his mind agitated with hopes and fears, with joys and sorrows, far beyond any thing which is felt in any of the other departments of human life? The

apostle himself, when he determined to know nothing among them to whom he laboured, save Jesus and him crucified, was with them in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

But again. Those souls, for whom we ought to travail as in birth, are not generally sensible either of their own value, or of their own danger—or of the value and suitability of the salvation which is offered to them in the gospel. They weary men, and they weary our God also. They daily give occasion of grief to those who in some measure feel for their situation, and they daily grieve God's good and Holy Spirit. "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." "How shall I give thee up Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?—Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together."

And how often are the most flattering prospects of ministerial success blasted? This or the other individual gives some evidence of being awakened. The servant of souls enters with exquisite feelings into all the supposed feelings of the supposed convert. He weeps with him when he weeps, and he partakes also largely of his joys. But after a few weeks or months of alternate distress and alternate joy, he returns again to the world, or he sinks down into a cold and lifeless profession. And the servant of souls has now to weep by himself, for the object of his grief cannot enter into his feelings. Hear the declaration of an apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 20, 21. "For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not; lest there be de-

bates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness, and fornication, and lasciviousness, which they have committed.”

And even with respect to those who in some measure preserve their first love, and who continue to give some considerable evidence of having passed from death unto life, the anxiety of the faithful servant of our Lord Jesus is great and permanent. The heart of man is remarkably deceitful. The adversary of souls is ever on the alert. The world at large is watching for our halting. Instances of final apostacy even in those who were considered the most firmly established are numerous. And just in proportion as our pleasures and our hopes are high, when the word has apparently produced the desired effect, will be our disappointment and our mental agony when facts demonstrate that even in our prosperity the enemy had only deceived us.

Now, add to all these things—that the man of God, the faithful expounder of God’s word, is a man of reading, a man of study and close thinking, a man who, from fidelity to his master and the souls of men, never attempts to serve his God with that which cost him nothing.—And add also—that as a man of prayer, he has to wrestle with his God in his closet for himself, and his family, and his flock, and his careless neighbours—and that as a christian, he has to watch over his own heart, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked—and that he is always more or less reminded, that after he has preached Christ to others he himself may be a cast-away.—Add all these things together, and the wear and tear of the body by mental exertion must be daily and hourly and nightly, and always of such

a kind as admits of very little repair. Against continual wastes of this kind, the most approved rules to promote longevity and bodily vigour furnish no defence. The only rule given in all such cases is, "Remove the cause;" that is, cease to discharge ministerial duty with vigour and fidelity.

And yet these are not all. Nor are they in many cases the kind of mental feelings which are the most destructive to our animal nature. The messenger of God's salvation to fallen man is himself a man. He has all the feelings and a large share of the infirmities of men. And while he is himself the object of envy and jealousy, and every malicious passion, those passions themselves also occasionally prey upon his own spirits. See Acts xv. 34—39. and Gal. ii. 11—14.

He is a man, and he expects to be supported by his fellow men and fellow christiaas in the faithful discharge of the important duties of his station. But in cases innumerable, and in important cases too, he is left, so far as human aid is concerned, to stand alone. Nay it is even well, if those from whom he expected important assistance are not found in the opposition. See Gal. iv. 12—13.

He is a man, and as a man he is a member of civil as well as of religious society; and as a member of civil society, he partakes more or less of the spirit of the place where Providence has cast his lot. And from every thing, whether without or within, which disturbs the peace of the place, he also suffers, and generally suffers in a manner peculiar to himself.

He is a man, and he has all the honorable feelings of a man. He puts a high value upon his character, and this character is to him every thing; and yet this character is frequently by no means respected or appreciated, or defended as he expected it would have been, even by those

who are very far from joining the hue and cry which is raised against him.

He is a man, and he has all the relations of a man, and he is under obligations to perform all the social duties of a man. The anxieties of the family, and the affections of the family, and the little jealousies of the family, and the daily wants of the family, are consequently daily preying upon his spirits. And from his habits, and from his high state of moral feeling, and from the rank which he is supposed to hold in society, all these different kind of feelings have a more destructive influence upon his animal frame, than the very same kind of cares have upon other men, in other situations of life.

The general proposition is then, we think, clearly made out—viz.—That of all the occupations of men, the ministerial office, when sufficiently understood, and entered upon with becoming spirit, produces the most intense action of the mind upon the clay tabernacle.

It was under such labours, and under such anxieties, that the clay tabernacle of our friend, whose death we would this day improve, was worn out. Blest with a mind of the first order—having his lot cast under circumstances peculiarly trying—feeling strongly the obligations under which he was to have his all devoted to the service of his master—the earthly tenement was battered down before, in the ordinary language of men, he had half fulfilled his days. His period of public services was short—his period of notoriety and successful action still shorter—but from the hour that he resolved to live, and to serve his God and his fellow men, by the energies of his mind, till the hour that his spirit took its flight to the land of spirits, the action of his mind upon his body was continued and intense, and the building was nearly dissolved before the value of the inhabitant was known, except by a few of those who were in some degree kindred spirits.

He was from the very commencement of his studies a close student—and all that he studied he resolved thoroughly to understand. In no case was it enough for him merely to know that such and such was the doctrine taught, or such and such was the matter of fact. In every case, and in every step, he thought and examined for himself—and in many cases in the course of his studies he carried his enquiries, and made his application of facts considerably farther than either his author or instructor had done. Originality was a leading feature in the character of his mind.

He entered upon the great work of the ministry under circumstances peculiarly well adapted for the excitement of a mind of this cast. The important tract of country extending from the Allegheny to the Gulf of Mexico was to be the sphere of his action. He beheld this vast region filling up with immortal beings. He knew the value of natural advantages. The fertility of the soil—the salubrity of the climate—the facilities for internal navigation, of this portion of the country, were duly appreciated by him. He despised not political sagacity. The wisdom of the legislator—the integrity of the judge—the valor of the soldier, he well knew were essential to the prosperity of any country; and with no common joy did he behold these intellectual and moral talents springing up among the sons of the west, with a luxuriancy only surpassed by the productions of their fields and their forests. But with him all plans of future greatness were deficient which did not embrace ETERNITY. And with him the gospel of God's Son, with its regenerating and sanctifying influences, was the only thing which could confer durability and happiness upon any association of men. He beheld, and beheld with no ordinary feeling, that the means enjoyed for religious and moral improvement were

neither of that character nor of that extent which the wants of such a country required. Nor, without a very great change in the spirit and conduct of those whose duty it was to attend to these matters, were adequate means likely soon to be enjoyed. For, whatever may be the fact now, the real situation of this important section of the union, was at the time of his entering into the ministry, not known, or if known, not generally felt, even by those among us who were very far from being indifferent to these things.—That he had at this time pretty accurate conceptions of the state of things, and what is more, had an accurate conception of the only remedy, and actually made some considerable exertions to apply the remedy, it will be the duty of his biographer to state.

The circumstances, my friends, under which he endeavoured, in the strength of his Master, to rear up within these walls—“a glorious church—(to use his own words) a church composed of spirits ardent as the seraph—pure as heaven’s own cherubim, and lofty as arch angels which bow before God;”—these circumstances, and these labours, and these anxieties, are still fresh before us. Many of them are also of such a nature that, though my heart is considerably steeled against feelings of that kind, yet I could not command myself in attempting any detail. But they are fresh and known; and may they never be forgotten by us, or by any to whom he ministered, till under the influence of the good and holy Spirit they produce that great and important effect, which was the object of all his labours, and all his anxieties.

He was taken away from among us, while his value was but very imperfectly known. Yet he lived not, he laboured not in vain. When Messiah’s mighty plan shall be fully executed, it will be seen that the labours and the sufferings of JAMES M’CHORD were important links in the grand

chain of events which are ushering in the glory of the latter days. The building in which we are assembled, which we trust will be consecrated to the service of Almighty God till the consummation of all things, and within whose walls the praises of the Saviour shall perhaps be singing at the very moment when the second coming of Messiah shall be announced.* Yes, this building, and the successive generations of worshippers within it, shall bear testimony that he lived, that he laboured not in vain.

He lived not in vain.—In the vast assembly which is now before the throne, there are already more than one individual, who, in raising and in continuing the song—"worthy is the Lamb who was slain,"—points to a corner of a pew in Market-Street church, in which her or his heart was first led to acknowledge the Lamb's supremacy.

He lived not in vain.—By no means. He has entered into his rest, and his works shall follow him. The Spirit shall yet be given—nay, we trust he is already given, to bring to remembrance many of the warnings and admonitions, and tenders of mercy, which he made to perishing sinners in the name of his Master. And for many years yet to come, standing on the portals of high heaven, he shall welcome into the society of the blessed, "you my father, and you my little daughter."§

He lived not in vain.—While the English language is known—while any thing of refined taste and genuine piety shall fire the human heart, his Vol. of Sermons entitled "A Last Appeal," shall bear testimony of a lofty mind bringing all its energies into the service of the sanctuary. And what is more—these sermons shall be, in the hands of the Spirit of God, while they are known, as they have already in some instances been, the means of leading

* *Last Appeal*, page 26. § *Ibid.* page 182—183.

many of the thoughtless and of the hardened, to contemplate Eternity, and the realities of Eternity, as objects of desire—not of dread.

He lived not in vain.—He was selected by infinite wisdom, as the first of a noble host of native Kentuckians who in the morning of life, and at a period in the history of their country when the honours and the emoluments of this world were to be found every where but among the servants of the Cross, have deliberately devoted their substance, and their time, and their talents, and their literary acquirements, and their lives, to promote the eternal salvation of their fellow men.

Hail Kentucky!—Messiah's grant of the heathen, and of the ends of the earth, covers thy extensive and fertile fields. Thy own sons shall yet wave Messiah's banner, and publish Messiah's salvation, along thy every brook and along thy every mountain side. The wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy, shall yet be the inheritance of thy numerous children. And in the day when our God shall come, and all his saints with him, JAMES M'CHORD shall be seen rising from that vault and taking his place at the head of the Kentucky detachment.

And "the resurrection of the just shall unfold his character," and shall fully explain all that has been dark and mysterious in his lot. May you and I, my friends, on that important day, have our portion with him. And when we are called individually to put off this clay tabernacle, may we give as decisive evidence as he gave, that we are going to an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

AMEN.

ADDRESS DELIVERED AT HIS INTERMENT,

May 30, 1820.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

The occasion on which we are assembled speaks, and speaks loudly to us, and to the inhabitants of this town—or rather—the God who made us—the God who preserves us—and the God who is soon to be our judge, speaks to us through the occasion.

Another* of God's messengers of peace is departed—and is taken from us by his master in the prime of life. The event itself is a sermon—and no ordinary sermon. May we attend to it.

Our brother, who frequently addressed us in this house, and prayed us in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, is now taken home, and his dust is to be deposited in this sacred spot till the resurrection of the great day. He has, by the will of God, served his generation. We are yet left in our different stations, and with our different talents and different opportunities of usefulness. But how soon, or under what circumstances, we may be called to follow him into the eternal world, we know not. Let us occupy till our Lord come. "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence: But we will bless the Lord from this time and for evermore."

Perhaps to every individual present our departed brother has, on more occasions than one, made a plain, a direct, and pressing offer of pardon and peace, and eternal salvation through the blood of the atonement. And to the most of us, he has made many such offers. And before his body could be brought to the place of interment, he has made his return to his Master.† He has given in his account, and we must in our turn individually give in ours.

* *The Rev. Benjamin Birge, of the Episcopal Church, at the age of 25, and who had been only a few months in orders, had died 1st April.*

† *Last Appeal, page 90.*

Sinner, wilt thou still reject, and reject to thy own eternal destruction, God's offer of peace?—Were our departed brother to address you again, he would just in God's name say, as he often said, "Why wilt thou die? There is hope in Israel for you. God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to them their trespasses. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so even is the Son of man lifted up—that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. We pray you therefore in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God. Put not away from you the Saviour and his salvation. With the simplicity of a little child give yourself up to the Saviour. Make direct application to this Saviour, and verily thou shalt be saved. Reject this Saviour—neglect and despise the ordinances of the Saviour, and thou must perish."

Sinner, thou art once more warned, and if thou dost perish, thy blood shall be upon thy own head.

Friends of our Lord Jesus—who in mercy were called from darkness to light—from death to life—or who were edified and comforted under the ministrations of our departed brother—give thanks to God on his account, and on your own account. You are to be his crown of joy and rejoicing in the day of the Lord. In you, and in the multitude whom we trust you will be the means of bringing to glory, he is to have a full compensation for all the sorrows and and toils, and distresses of every kind, which he endured, and endured as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. His warfare was perhaps severe—but it was short. He served a good Master—he was not kept too long in the field. He is now entered into an eternity of unmixed enjoyment, as the reward of a few years hard services.

Personal friends of the deceased—The object of your attention had a heart without guile.* Your friendship there-

* *Last Appeal*, page 119.

fore was not misplaced. His Master also duly appreciates all the services and offices of love, which you performed to his disciple and servant in the gospel. And this Master will be in no man's debt. He will fully reward you and yours even in this life. And only commit your personal salvation to the same keeping to which your departed friend at an early period of life committed his personal salvation, and when all earthly friends must stand at a distance, you will not be without a friend. And that friend will be the Lord of the happy land into which you shall be admitted.

Personal enemies of the deceased, if any such are present—JAMES M'CHORD was a man, and a young man, and he had to deal with men—and it was his lot to deal with men, sometimes under circumstances peculiarly delicate—and sometimes also to deal with men who were not always of the most gentle temper. He may therefore, in some cases, have given just cause of offence, and of alienation of affection.

He was a faithful minister of our Lord Jesus Christ.—He declared the whole counsel of God, and knew of no compromise betwixt light and darkness, betwixt Christ and Belial. He never for a moment admitted the principle that a man might at the same time be a genuine friend of Messiah, and the servant of the God of this world. He never flattered. He was consequently, as his master was before him, hated by the world.

But whatever he was when he was himself flesh and blood, and when he had to deal with flesh and blood, he is now among the spirits of just men made perfect, and is himself as perfect as any of them. And he now knows in all its extent and force, the injunction of our Lord—"Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you." And were he now to speak, he would

likely tell you—that he frequently prayed as fervently for the temporal and eternal welfare of those whom he supposed were using him ill, as ever he did for himself, or for his most affectionate friends. And many of these prayers we trust are accepted—and will yet be answered—and blessings innumerable will yet descend upon us, and upon our families, as their fruits.

Friends and fellow mortals—How soon is all that is agreeable, and all that is disagreeable, in this life at an end. The most of the supposed mighty things which have occasioned, or which still do occasion much joy or much sorrow, will be but very little things when Eternity, with all its realities, shall open upon us. And how large a portion of our time is occupied about things which are soon, very soon, to be of no value—of no manner of use either to us or to our families! We brought nothing into this world with us, and it is certain we can carry nothing out of it.

Brethren,—There is an heavenly inheritance to be secured. Let us direct our attention more steadily to it—and to those objects connected with it. We profess to be travelling to that land of glory and peace, and we hope to spend in that land not only a few months and years—but an endless eternity. Let us feel and act as heirs of immortal bliss. And then, whether we may be called to breathe our last, at home or abroad, among friends or among strangers—whether we shall be called to depart, having received, by a slow but certain disease, full warning—or have soul and body parted by the accident of the moment—All will be well with us—The messenger of death will be the messenger of peace. And then

Our flesh shall slumber in the ground,
Till the last trumpet's joyful sound:
Then burst the chains with sweet surprise,
And in our Saviour's image rise,

SUBSCRIBERS' NAMES.

LEXINGTON.

Benjamin Ayres	Thomas B. Megowan
George W. Anderson	Andrew M'Clure
James Anderson	Douglass M'Guire
George Boswell	Andrew M'Calla
George Washington Brown	Wm. Montgomery
Harry I. Bodley	B. R. M'Ilvaine
Anne Maria Boswell	John M. M'Calla
Mary Beck	James Morrison
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William Bowman	J. Livingston Maxwell
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William Bell	L. M'Cullough
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David Castleman	George Morton
Thomas Curry	Stephen P. Norton 2.
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Susan C. R. Corlis	Benjamin O. Peers
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Sidney M. Edmiston	M. D. Richardson
Asa Farrow	W. H. Richardson
James Graves	Jane S. W. Ridgeley
Hester Hawes	Lucy E. S. Ridgeley
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James Harper	Sally Short
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Thomas Kane	Jane A. Short
James Logue	Catharine Saunders
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C. M. Lockwood	R. S. Todd 2
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	James Trotter, jun.

George Trotter, sen.
Robert Tilford
Samuel Trotter
Betsy Trotter
Amanda Taylor
John D. Taylor
Mary Tilford
Charles Wilkins 5
Jane Wilkins 2
Abraham Walker
E. Warfield
W. C. Warfield
Charles Henry Warfield
Walter Warfield

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James Bell
Alexander Black
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Elizabeth Bryant
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Robert I. Breckinridge
Waller Bullock
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Jesse P. Devore
Nathaniel Ferguson
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Amanda M. F. Fry
Hawes Graves
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Hugh M'Cormack Logan
James Logan
George Logan
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Robert Marshall
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[*Natchez*

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 Susanna P. M'Dowell
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 Ann M. Dunu
 Susan Walle
 Eliza Creighton
 Hannah Lodruck, *Adams c'ty*
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 Isabella Ellison, do.
 D. Jennings, *Lebanon, Ky.*
 Felix B. Grundy, do.
 Hugh Muldrow, *N. Market K.*
 Philip C. Morehead, *B. Green.*
 H. Butler, *Russelville*
 Charles S. Morehead, do.
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 R'd I. Munford, *Munfordsville*
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