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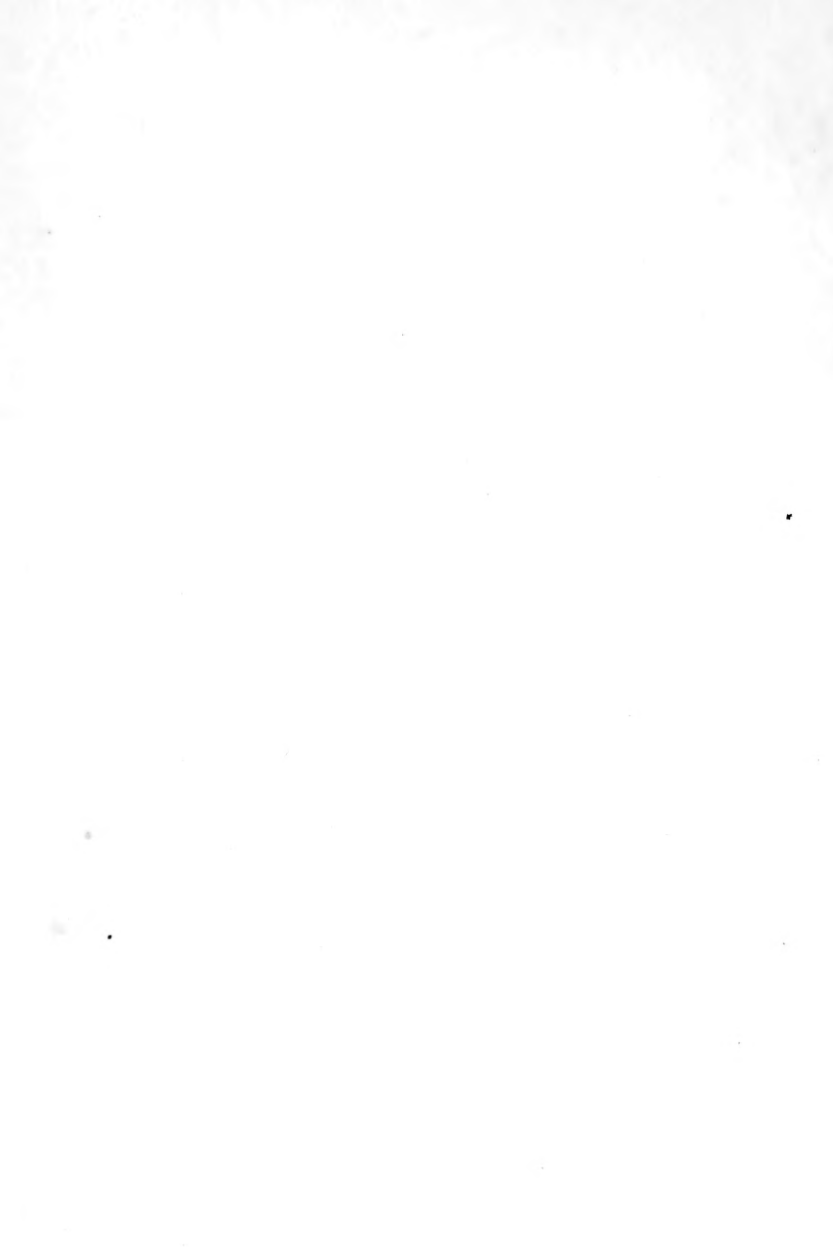
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S E R M O N S

AND

S K E T C H E S O F S E R M O N S.

BY THE

REV. JOHN SUMMERFIELD, A.M..

LATE A PREACHER IN CONNEXION WITH THE METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

WITH

A N I N T R O D U C T I O N

BY THE

REV. THOMAS E. BOND, M.D.

“Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”—*Rev.*, xxii., 12.

NEW YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,

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DEDICATION.

TO THE REV. JOSHUA SOULE,

ONE OF THE BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

REV. AND VERY DEAR SIR,

Many considerations impel me to dedicate this volume of Sermons and Sketches of Sermons to you ; but the chief are, that you were among the first who cordially welcomed the Author to this country, and into the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church ; to no one was he more indebted for counsel and direction during his brief sojourn among us ; and to no one did he more implicitly yield his entire confidence. He was wont to speak among his friends of your kindness, as being little less than parental, and to express for you a filial regard.

The bereaved relatives of the deceased unite in the desire to embrace this opportunity of expressing publicly their high esteem for you as a man and as a minister of our holy religion, and their grateful remembrance of the kindness so generously extended to one whose memory is so dear to them ; and by none of them is the occasion improved with more real gratification than by,

Reverend sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,

JAMES BLACKSTOCK

Port Chester, April, 1842.

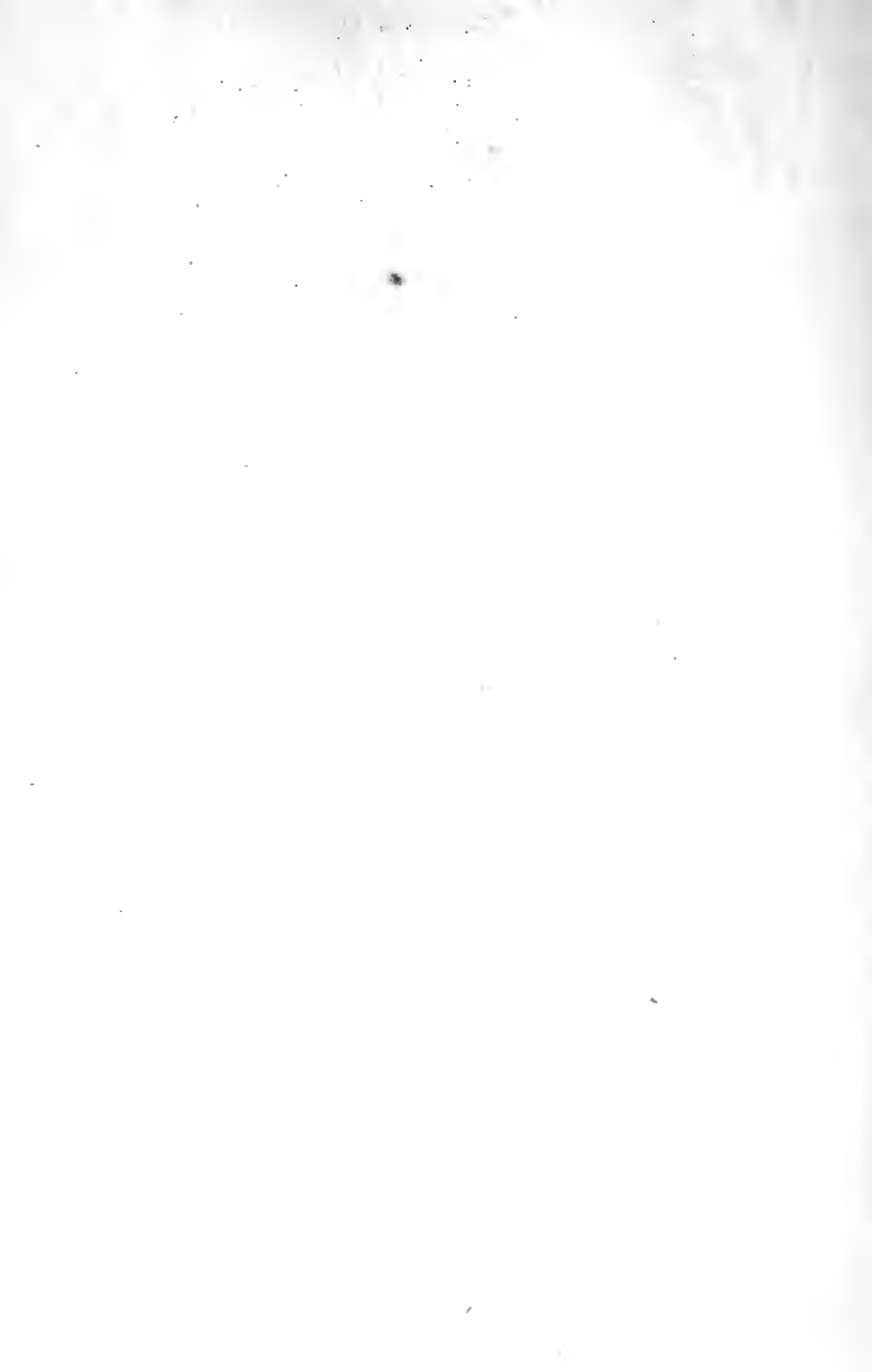


PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN offering to the public this new edition of Summerfield's Sermons, it is proper to state that a different sketch, selected from his remaining manuscripts, has been substituted in place of the fifty-third in the first edition. It was discovered, soon after the work was published, that an error had been committed in introducing this sketch, the thoughts and language of which are borrowed, almost entirely, from another. Mr. Summerfield was eminently an original thinker; but he was, at the same time, a diligent and laborious student, and intent on gathering from the ample stores of Christian literature whatever might strengthen his efforts in the great cause to which he was so ardently devoted. Hence he did not hesitate to transcribe occasionally, for a guide in his public ministrations, such expositions of Divine truth as impressed him most forcibly in the course of his reading, though always with some mark of acknowledgment. But, as these marks were merely for his own recognition, they are often not very distinct, and not uniformly of one character. Thus, in the instance here noticed, the evidence of quotation was so obscure as not to attract the compiler's notice. It is proper farther to remark, however, as well for the satisfaction of the reader as in justice to the reputation of the revered and lamented author, that the work has been examined throughout, with a view to ascertain if there were any other inadvertences of the kind: none were found.

The very favourable reception given to the first edition of these sermons affords satisfactory proof of their high appreciation by the religious community, while it encourages the hope that, through God's providence, they will be made a distinguished instrument for good, in comforting and confirming the Christian, and in converting sinners from the error of their ways.

New-York, December, 1842.



INTRODUCTION.

At length the public are presented with a volume of Sermons, and Sketches of Sermons, from the preparations for the pulpit of the Rev. John Summerfield; a preacher who, for a brief space, enchained his immense audiences by the more than magic influence of an eloquence, as peculiar in its character, as it was universal in its control over the minds of men. The question will naturally arise in the mind of the reader, "Why have they been so long withheld?" The answer is, that those who possessed these precious remains, were made diffident of the favour with which their publication would be received, from some indications of disappointment when the life of Mr. Summerfield was presented to the public, written by one who, all agree, was eminently qualified for the task, and who certainly spared no pains to fulfil the expectations of the numerous friends, and admirers of the deceased. In fact, Mr. Holland accomplished all that could be done, in regard to the biography of one whose brief career, though it blazed with unexampled brightness, was nevertheless marked with a sameness of incident, from which no writer could educe the variety which is necessary to give interest to narrative, whether of a general or an individual character.

In the life of Mr. Summerfield there was nothing very peculiar. We mark, indeed, an early development of those strong mental endowments, which were so strikingly exhibited even in his first pulpit efforts; but these were associated with the common waywardness of genius, and the concomitant premature relish for the vices of manhood. The process, by which the Lord of the Harvest called such an instrument into his service has been so often witnessed, that, though it still astonishes by the exhibition of omnipotent power, as do all the works of God, yet, like the firmament above us, being constantly in view, it no longer surprises by its novelty. His conversion was attended with no extraordinary circumstances. The instruments were such as to humble human pride, by showing that "the excellency of the power was of God, and not of man." Even the abiding, indelible impression made on his mind by the wholesomeness of parental precept, and the piety and uniformity of parental example, is so far from being a new exhibition of truth, that we are taught to look for it by the Old Testament Scriptures; and it has been con-

firmed to us in all ages by the experience of the Church. All then, that a biographer could do, Mr. Holland has done. He recorded faithfully, and he made a suitable use of the facts of the record.

But it was precisely where the biographer could do least, that most was expected. The public ministry of this extraordinary evangelist burst suddenly upon the world, as a comet shows itself among the heavenly constellations; but the comet, view it from what place or position you will, is the same. All that can be seen of it is seen at once; and the future historian finds in its appearance only a simple fact, which can be recorded in a single page. Wherever Mr. Summerfield appeared, there was the same eagerness in all classes of people to hear him, and to see him; and, everywhere, there was the same uniform admiration of the preacher's manner and of his sermons. In Ireland, in England, and in America, whatever were the characteristic differences in the taste, and qualifications, and even the prejudices of the hearers, all heard with the same delight; all hearts melted, and all prejudices gave way, under an eloquence which it was as impossible to describe as to resist. But still, all this afforded little for his biographer. In any one of these countries, to describe the scene, and detail the facts and incidents of one occasion, on which he published to listening multitudes the Word of Life, was to give what occurred on every such occasion; and these followed each other with a rapidity which afforded no opportunity for other pursuits or engagements. Thus public expectation, with respect to the biography of Mr. Summerfield, was disappointed, because the expectation was unreasonable. All minds, all hearts were impressed with the living Summerfield, and no one could restore him to life, and present him as he had been seen and heard, the messenger of mercy and love, to whose ministry attentive multitudes listened with a delight, which it was vainly hoped could be recalled by the incidents of his life. Upon reading again the work of Mr. Holland, we are constrained to say, it is among the very best biographies that has fallen in our way; yet we remember to have participated in the common feeling when we first perused it. It was the manifestation of this feeling which discouraged the publication of the sermons and sketches contained in the volume now issued, as it was feared they would fall too far short of what so many heard from the lips of the author to give satisfaction. But they have now been postponed until they can be read by many, without the disadvantage of such comparison; and by the remainder, after time and intervening events have

weakened, though they never can efface, the impressions made upon them by the sermons when they heard them from the pulpit. Thus we look with pleasure on the portrait of a deceased friend, after time has mellowed the severity of the bereavement ; though at first, it only revived the poignancy of our grief, by awakening the recollection of our loss.

It was our happiness to know Mr. Summerfield, and to attend upon his ministry ; and since time has, in some degree, removed the spell of enchantment which his eloquence threw around us, we have endeavoured to analyze his discourses, yet fresh in our recollection, in order to discover what it was that gave such unexampled power over the mind and heart to one so young, and, consequently, immature in judgment and experience ; but we have not been satisfied with our success.

It could not be said that he exceeded many whom we have known, in either learning or knowledge, though his attainments in these respects were very respectable ; nor was he superior to hundreds of the preachers of his day, in reasoning or argumentative powers. His voice, though sweet and rich in its tones, had no great compass. His discourses did not strike one by the novelty of his opinions, or by the erudition they displayed. There were, it is true, in all his sermons, " thoughts that breathed and words that burned ;" but, for the most part, they presented only " what oft was thought, though ne'er so well express'd." What, then, was the irresistible charm in his preaching ? We honestly confess we cannot say. We have some vague idea of it, but cannot embody it in words. There was, however, one peculiarity which could not fail to strike the hearer : it was what is called, by common consent, *simplicity*. The truths he dwelt upon had been felt in all their power by the preacher, and he presented them in the simple, chaste, and forcible language of unsophisticated feeling. The hearer who participated in his religious enjoyments, responded instinctively to every feeling of the preacher ; and one who knew nothing of such experience, felt that it was the most important want of his nature, and his whole soul went out in cravings for the possession. It was this simplicity of style which never failed to make its way to the heart, as certainly as pompous diction, and parade of language and learning shuts up every avenue to the feelings.

But, though there was much in the clear perception, and the personal experience of the truths presented, and much, too, in the simplicity of the style and language in which they were clothed, it must be admitted that there was something in the *manner* of

the preacher, which greatly added to the effect of his preaching. But who can describe this manner? It was not the gracefulness of his attitudes and action, though these were perfect. Every movement, whether of body or members, was not only exactly correct, but intuitively expressive of thought or feeling, appearing to obey some immediate impulse of the soul. There was nothing theatrical, nothing studied, nothing which gave the slightest suspicion that it was done for effect. All seemed to come unsought, the immediate, spontaneous sympathy of a body, which lived and acted in obedience to the promptings of the soul within it. Yet this was not the peculiar charm, however important an auxiliary it might be. It was not even the first, or the strongest impression made on the auditory, though it could not fail to be taken into the account. But that which we remember to have struck us most forcibly in the manner of Mr. Summerfield was the *meekness*, the humility, the lowliness of heart which appeared in his whole deportment, bringing forcibly to the mind, the language and the example of Him who said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." Every one saw personified, the Saviour of men in the act of washing the feet of his disciples, and the soul clave to the minister who bore the image and superscription of his Lord. It was this that so prepossessed you as to subdue, and shame, every previously-formed intention to criticise the coming sermon. The affections were surrendered at once, and the decisions of the judgment were anticipated by the suffrage of the heart.

These selections from Mr. Summerfield's manuscripts are entitled "Sermons and Sketches of Sermons," because many of them are really sermons, having not only the outlines of regular discourses, but the filling up is nearly perfect. Yet it is not intended that the reader should suppose they are here found as they were delivered. The elements of the structure, in all its parts, are entire, but the painting is hardly anywhere visible. Indeed, this was often the inspiration of the moment, when his fertile though sanctified imagination, was kindled by the holy fire with which the angel touched the lips of the prophet, delivering a message from heaven. He seemed to have as little warning of these touches as his hearers, and hence we could not expect to find them in his closet preparations.

Those who may be disappointed at finding in these sermons, less than they hoped for, of that peculiar, impressive eloquence which they admired in Mr. Summerfield, ought to remember too, as we have before hinted, how much they were impressed by the *deliv-*

ery of the sermons. They will recollect that when he read a hymn, or a chapter in the Bible, we wondered how we could have overlooked the many beauties and excellences in the composition, which then, for the first time, presented themselves. If this was owing to his manner of reading the hymn, or the chapter, how much more were his sermons indebted to the manner of their delivery.

During the sixteen years which have elapsed since the death of the lamented author of these sermons, the relative into whose possession his manuscripts came, has submitted them to several friends whose opinions he values highly, and they have all strongly urged him to publish at least a selection from the voluminous manuscripts containing the preparations for the pulpit, notwithstanding the unfinished state in which they were left. His own convictions of their value, and of the extensive good they were calculated to do, being thus corroborated, he has at length ventured upon the publication. In doing this, he has adhered faithfully to the manuscripts, giving nothing but what is the author's own; except, that the quotations from the Scriptures which are referred to have been supplied.

We have read the proof-sheets of these "sermons and sketches," as well as many of them in manuscript, and we are gratified to find them more perfect than could have been expected of an extemporaneous preacher. It was the author's practice to prepare first a brief outline of his sermon, and, as soon after having delivered it as possible, to commit it to writing at greater length, from his recollection of the course he had taken when in the pulpit. His recommendation to a friend, then a student, but now an eminent minister of Christ, in reference to sermonizing, will give the best idea of his own method of study and preparation for the pulpit. "In reply to your remarks on extemporary discourses," he says, "I am glad to find your own soul in such perfect harmony with mine. You very much magnify the difficulty of it, but you have not yet been called to grapple with it; and I am fully persuaded that, even in your infancy as a minister of Christ Jesus, you will strangle the serpents: such is my decided impression, from the views you have already taken of the subject; and yet you cry, 'Hic labor, hoc opus est!' I do not know that anything I could suggest would be applicable to your circumstances, because the mode of training for the ministry in our church, differs so totally from yours. * * * * *

"In your case I would recommend the choice of a companion or two, with whom you could accustom yourself to open and am-

plify your thoughts on a portion of the Word of God in the way of *lecture* ; choose a copious subject, and be not anxious to say *all* that might be said ; let your efforts be aimed at giving a *strong outline* ; the filling up will be much more easily attained. Prepare a *skeleton* of your *leading ideas*, branching them off into their *secondary* relations : this you may have before you. Digest well the subject, but be not careful to choose your *words* previous to your delivery. Follow out the idea in such language as may offer at the moment. Don't be discouraged if you fall down a hundred times ; for, though you fall, you shall rise again ; and cheer yourself with the prophet's challenge, 'Who hath despised the day of small things ?'

"To be a correct extemporaneous preacher, you will need to write a good deal, in order to correct style, and prune off the exuberance of language ; but I would not advise you to write on the subject upon which you intend to preach. If you fill up on paper the matter of your text, you will contract a slavish habit of cumbering your mind with the words of your previous composition. Write on *other* subjects, and leave your words free and spontaneous for pulpit exercises. I never preach without having prepared an outline, but I never write a sermon out at length."

The author possessed extraordinary powers in the use of the pen ; he wrote with a facility and accuracy that was truly astonishing ; apparently, with as much ease and facility as he spoke. He has left seven post octavo volumes of pulpit preparations, containing between three and four hundred sermons and skeletons of sermons. They are written in a style of elegance hardly to be surpassed ; an erasure or an interlineation is rarely to be found in his voluminous manuscripts. His indefatigable application to the study of the Holy Scriptures must have been with pen in hand, as he has also left two large books, one a counting-house leger, containing a vast amount of notes or comments on the Scriptures, written so extremely fine, and the words so abbreviated, that it is difficult to decipher them without a glass ; and, what is remarkable, an immense amount of these notes are written with a fine lead-pencil. Doubtless he discovered that he could make the pencil move faster than the pen. It is supposed, from the arrangement and the character of this labour, he must have contemplated writing a commentary on the Bible.

That the author studied the Bible thoroughly is evident from the knowledge of it he acquired, and which is so manifest in all his sermons. That he searched the Scriptures for himself, and searched deeply, is also clear, from the nature of the innumerable

notes contained in these large volumes. He did not rely implicitly on commentators, nor on the opinions of others; he laboured to open the mine himself, and to search for hidden treasures; and he laboured successfully. Very early in life, and long before he thought seriously of the Christian ministry, he was in the habit of closeting himself, week after week without intermission, from 4 o'clock in the morning until 8 in the evening, sixteen hours a day! Let the author himself speak in reference to commentators from whom he differed, as well as from the popular opinion on some points. "Names," says he, "are only entitled to the respect due to individuals. There is a certain independence of mind which spurns the trammels of hereditary knowledge, and seeks for knowledge itself. Our natural sluggishness, and mental apathy is the great reason why we bow implicitly to the opinions of great and good men; we do not bestir ourselves. I admire the man who does examine the opinion of another man, without bowing to his ipse dixit. Yet the world owes much to ancestral intellect."

"This independence of mind is quite different from that little pride which knowledge puffeth up; it is found, in the Christian, connected with the deepest self-abasement and humility before God, at whose feet he has laid both his ignorance and his knowledge."

When we take into the account, that the author commenced preaching before he reached the age of twenty years—that he was of a frail body and delicate constitution; and reflect on his abundant labours—that "he moved with the speed of a chariot-wheel down hill, till the axle catches fire"—preaching five, seven, and ten times a week, amounting to four hundred sermons in the first eighteen months of his ministry, besides delivering addresses on various occasions, we are filled with astonishment. His whole soul was bent upon "doing the work of an evangelist, and giving full proof of his ministry." To restrain him was impossible. If his friends remonstrated with him on his excessive labours, he was always ready with a reply, such as "The love of Christ constraineth me;" or "My time is short, I must be about my Father's business."

It is important to bear in mind that a number of the following discourses, especially some of the most extended, were delivered during the early part of the author's ministry, when he was comparatively a mere youth; and that the whole are, as nearly as possible, a transcript of the manuscripts as they were left, and which were not intended for publication. Under these circumstances,

due allowance should be made, as it must be admitted that there are few authors who would venture to put to the press, writings which had been kept as memoranda for their own eye, only.

When it is remembered, too, that during his short sojourn on earth, the author laboured under almost continual ill health, and was often brought, by his intense application to study, and his unremitting public labours, to the very verge of the grave, it will appear rather a matter of astonishment that his manuscripts are so numerous, and so nearly perfect, than that much is left unfinished. It will, we are persuaded, be a matter of rejoicing, that in what is now presented of the remains of Mr. Summerfield, "he, though dead, yet speaketh."

One* who had the privilege of examining the manuscript sermons remarks: "Having enjoyed the rare intellectual luxury of poring over his manuscripts, we are prepared to state, that his preparations for the pulpit evince the full concentration of all the powers of his mind, and the best use of all the resources of knowledge within his reach on the subjects on which he expatiated. But, though rich in thought and logical in their arrangement, the *composition* is left (purposely, it would appear) *unfinished*. Definitions and exegetical remarks are generally written out with studious accuracy and precision; but the occurrence, on almost every page, of broken hints, followed by a significant dash of the pen, indicates the orator's impatience of the trammels and tedium of previous composition, and the stirring of deep emotion within the breast that could find full vent only amid the hallowed excitements of the sanctuary. He did not offer to God of that which cost him nothing; but it was the *altar* that sanctified his gift, and the *fire* that consumed his sacrifice issued *immediately* from the propitious heavens."

The celebrated poet, James Montgomery, Esq., than whom no man living is more competent to form a just estimate of literary merit, on examining a part of the MS. sermons (chiefly the sketches), thus writes:† "I went with critical scrutiny through nearly one hundred sketches of sermons, in his own handwriting; and I give it as my deliberate conviction, that though they were very *unlike* what I had anticipated from a fervent, fearless, self-sacrificing preacher, the delight of wondering, weeping, and admiring audiences wherever he went, they were, in one main respect, far *superior*, being calculated less for instant effect than for abiding usefulness. Though but *studies*, they are, nevertheless, exceedingly methodical in plan; and in execution they are distinguished

* Rev. Matthew Richey, in a note in the Life of the Rev. William Black.

† See Holland's Life of Summerfield, page 11.

chiefly by sound doctrine, exact judgment, and severe abstinence from ornament. Such ornament, however, as does occur, is often exquisite; and from being occasionally interpolated (as after thoughts), I cannot doubt that, in uttering these condensed compositions at spontaneous length, illustrations the most lively and beautiful sprang in like manner out of the subject, when the preacher himself was full to overflowing, yet filling the faster the more he overflowed.

“And this was the right kind of preparation for one who always had *words* at command, but whose feelings commanded *him*. He came to the pulpit with the whole scheme of his discourse clearly and succinctly marked out in his mind. Then, when indeed he was ‘in the spirit,’ warmed, exalted, and inspired with the divinity of his theme, the chain of premeditated ideas, link by link, in seemingly extemporaneous succession, would be developed, while every thought, emotion, and appeal would body itself forth in the most vivid and appropriate language. Then truly would his bow abide in strength, and every shaft which he sent from the string, like the arrow of *Acestes* of old, would take fire in its flight, shine through the clouds, and vanish in the immensity of heaven.

“But as the Sabbath and the sanctuary were the day and the place of resurrection when his closet skeletons, thus clothed upon, became living, breathing, speaking oracles, the retrogression into their original forms would be proportionately to the preacher’s disadvantage. *Hearers*, who had been rapt towards the third heaven in the fiery chariot of his delivery, and almost seemed to hear ‘things which it was not lawful for man to utter,’ when they afterward became *readers* at home of the few faint outlines, however symmetrical and harmonious, would scarcely recognise their shadowy resemblance to the glorious apparitions which had gone by, never to be renewed except with the presence, the eye, and the voice of the preacher himself. In fact, every attempt to present on paper the splendid effects of impassioned eloquence, is like gathering up dew-drops, which appear jewels and pearls on the grass, but run to water in the hand; the essence and the elements remain, but the grace, the sparkle, and the form are gone.”

The reader, we hope, will find, upon perusing these precious remains of the beloved *Summerfield’s* pulpit labours, that although “the grace, the sparkle, and the form” of the dew-drops are gone, the water which remains is living water, clear, pure, satisfying;—as it ever issues from that fountain that springeth up into everlasting life.



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S E R M O N S.

SERMON I.

THE LORD LOVETH THE GATES OF ZION.

PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF A NEW CHAPEL.

Psalm lxxxvii., 2.—The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

“WALK about Zion, count her towers, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following:” “glorious things are spoken of her;” one of the most glorious forms our text. “God hates nothing that he has made;” “he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works;” “he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked,” bestows ten thousand blessings on the evil, and is in many respects the Saviour of all! He *loves with forbearance* even the *ungodly*; loves the awakened with *tender pity*; the *obedient believer* with *delight*: for saints are lovely in his sight. These he loves as individuals, these he regards as families. But their *public* assemblies do most honour him, and on them he bestows most honour. “The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.”

- I. Illustrate this fact.
- II. Discover its meaning.
- III. Endeavour to draw forth its practical good.

I. Illustrate this fact.

1. Ever since men began to multiply, God has been solicitous to provide places of public worship; solitary religion is unknown in the history of the Church; everywhere God has caused places to be erected in which to meet, render thanks, and ask those things which are needful (Liturgy). See his directions to the patriarchs for social altars; see the Mosaic table (the pattern by God himself); see his provi-

dence in the case of David, by which he was enabled to collect materials for building the Temple; see Solomon's extraordinary endowments—Providence. Josephus relates that, during the rebuilding of the Temple by Herod the Great, no rain fell but in the night. In the *Christian Church* we find the apostles selected the best situations to establish places of worship. Though the early Christians were compelled to meet in dens and caves, cellars and garrets, and often at dead of night, yet they always had some place, and, as soon as the cross supplanted the eagle, they built splendid temples to adore God. Thus the practice is kept up: it is God's voice.

2. A second illustration of the fact is found in the inducement held out to his servants to occupy them when erected; every possible inducement contrived—exhausted the ingenuity of Infinite Wisdom.

1. See the *solemn injunction*—not *optional*, and it is enjoined upon *us* as well as upon the *Jews*. “The lion goeth about seeking to devour” the scattered sheep; not those in the common fold, but those who have no bond of association, no common interest. “See that ye forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhort one another daily, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching,” the day of *persecution*: wo to him that falleth alone in the day of nature's sorrow and dissolution, with none to sympathize and pray.

2. But the subject is urged by a *promise*: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them:” *my eyes* shall be there, *my heart* shall be there, touched by the feelings of their infirmities, moved in pity. “I will clothe my ministers with salvation, and my people shall shout aloud for joy.” (Enlarge on the minister and the garment able to wrap them all—we hear words whereby we may be saved.) Jesus the Saviour, to the uttermost, in time and in eternity.—“Behold, we bring glad tidings,” is the import of our message.

3. God has exerted a remarkable *Providence* in illustration of this *fact*. Shishak, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Antiochus, and a host of others who dared to provoke and

disturb God's worship. What monuments of his anger! How awfully did they die! In *modern* times, in the civil wars kindled by religious contests, how were many places of religious worship profaned! but what judgments on the violators! History—in *more* modern times—revival by Wesley and Whitfield—when enemies arose—the history of our own Church will furnish you with awful examples! God has astonishingly protected places of worship and worshipping people! How many millions attend, some in carriages, some on foot, some through drifts of snow and rain * * * * (Limerick), and even then the places not commodious; yet how few have found their death there, or were killed in going or returning. How seldom is a church consumed by fire or lightning! It is a Providence! there can be no other solution—same always—see the Jews, when they went up three times a year to worship, surrounded by enemies, left their boundaries unprotected; no soldier behind; yet *no* instance of being invaded by enemies while worshipping.—(Grace Hill.)

God has astonishingly rewarded the patrons of houses of worship. *Your* parents, poor many of them, but wherever two or three went, they would have a house for God. God blessed them, so that *no* persons increased in wealth so rapidly. Then they built more; they always would have a house for him, and God rewarded them. Their children now rise up and call them blessed! So in old times, see David—even more so his son Solomon: certainly he became a fool, but this was his own fault. God tells us why he blessed: one built the house, and the other had it in his heart. Many other facts illustrate.

II. Discover its meaning. The reason of this preference—this paramount love. Why?

1. We may find a reason in the people that assemble there; not that we have a *claim* in justice. Who assemble here generally? Not gangs of thieves, not merciless assassins, the seditious and treasonable who meet at midnight; not those who prowl our streets at the dead hour, and sell their body, soul, and glory; not the foul adulterer, whose eye waits for the twilight; not the staggering drunkard, whose

brutal gratification is the abolition of his senses ; these are not in general here. Here assemble docile youth, sisters, wives, mothers, fathers, industrious mechanics, loyal subjects ; men who are either saved from sin or come inquiring ; either are virtuous or desire to become so. God beholds these with approbation, and loves the *place* in which they meet.

2. Another reason may be found in the exercises performed there. It is that they pray, and sing, and listen to the tidings of salvation ; they hear his law promulged, Gospel preached, ordinances are administered ; God is glorified, man blessed, and God loves the exercises.

3. Another reason is, the good done there, the ignorant instructed, profligate reclaimed, guilty pardoned, unholy renewed, miserable made happy, vicious reformed, pious encouraged and instructed ; more, heaven is brought down to earth, and earth raised to heaven. Now God is love ; and he *cannot* behold these without *sharing* at least in the joy of angels ! Nay, farther, it is in the house of God that the stone of movent is dropped in mercy's pool, which makes its widened circles till *all* may be healed. In these places all our charitable institutions arise. Sunday and Charity schools, Tract, Bible, and Missionary societies had their origin here. To plead the cause of these, ministers are never backward ; the materials of all our charities were provided by the preaching of the Gospel. I have often wondered how the ingenuity of charity can invent so many : charity is infinite. British wealth is without end, and British charity equal to it ; and who can tell how many more are in embryo, warming into life in our churches ; some may spring forth here.

4. Another reason is, the glory that redounds to him : but he takes it well, and chiefly as it redounds again to us. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God"—The lisping praise of the Sunday-schools ! * * *

* * * * *

III. Endeavour to draw forth its practical good.

1. If God *so* love them, so should *we*. Are we not called

to be imitators of him? Should we not love this better than our own? The Jews are reprov'd for dwelling in ceiled houses while the house of God lay desolate. I imagine God commends you in now erecting a more splendid house. * *

2. Attend worship; and do not be so lavish in your expenses at home as to leave nothing for God's house; do not love your own home too well on a cold winter's evening; suffer no frivolous excuse to detain you. Who are they that flourish in Zion? Are they those who once in six months or so enter the temples of the Lord? Are they old trees, that by a stimulus such as *oratory* come out, but not else? No; they that are *planted* in the house of the Lord, they are still fat and flourishing in old age.

But what inducements to attend? Why, where should subjects love to be but in the presence-chamber of their sovereign? Do not kiss his hand as a courtier. He is thy Lord, and adore thou him. Where should the spouse be but where the husband is? The Lord is thy husband! Where do the children love to be but where the parents are? God is your Father: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" Where should the indigent and wretched be but at the mansions of the benevolent and great? We are *poor*, and our wants recur *daily*; the impressions wear away; come again.

But mind with what affections we attend the house of God; beasts might come, but they would be no better.

1. *Come in a Christian spirit*—with holy reverence—let there be no trifling; these are gross indecencies here and awful affronts. "Keep thy foot from being taken," for he is great and thou art little; he is just and thou art guilty; he he is Almighty and thou a worm; who, if angry, can crush thee; who can also elevate thee to the dignity of angels.

2. *Attend it with desire*. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Divine mercies are too rich to be thrown away on triflers; as soon might you feed a dog with Bibles; there must be a congeniality; come desiring, praying, bringing the word to the heart.

3. Should we not *come with delight* to meet the heralds of salvation, who ever breathe a sweet odour, willing to impart their souls to us, to meet our Christian brethren and sisters? “As iron sharpeneth iron, so the countenance of a man his friend.” To meet the angels of God, who on Jacob’s ladder descend with blessings and ascend with tidings. To meet God, the Saviour, the Holy Ghost, the fragrant breeze from heaven’s spicy throne! to find heaven nearer. Are not these circumstances delightful? or how grovelling our taste if by these our spirits are not touched; yea, wound up with rapture: “I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” “My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!”

Finally. Countenance and support the public worship of God to the uttermost. Do it for *God’s sake*, and thus testify your gratitude. For your *neighbours’ sake*; many will not mind it, but surely one Magdalene will come in at this door. To some one it will be said, “Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven.” Look forward, see how it is serving the public when a prodigal comes in at the door (*your own son* perchance) on a dark night: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” And this repeated for scores of years to come. Do something now to ensure this; fancy you see through the vista of time, hundreds of years hence; one singles out one and another by happy spirits, as the fruit of this chapel. Do it for *your own sakes*.—No man can dislike to come to this fine house. And when truth begins to be feeble in your mind, and you fall by temptation, come here; it will be a delightful repast.

Do it for *posterity*. “One generation passeth away and another cometh.” You must die! “A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children’s children,” and what recollection can more delightfully play round the heart when throbbing its last? It will be a rose to perfume the dying bed. Feel, then, for your children. There is one advantage in a Methodist chapel; a conference deed. In it are recorded, and put under the broad shield of the constitution, every glorious

doctrine of the blessed God! Here then is a certainty of perpetuity of good; no preacher (if one could be found wicked enough) can alter the doctrines delivered here. *

* * * * *

I have been deeply interested in this; it is an era in my pilgrimage; and I am so delighted that I can truly say, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." You who have co-operated with us in this good work, accept our thanks, and may the God of peace bless you with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. * * *

* * * * *

You have kept the best wine, I hope, to the last; pour it out; do it cheerfully. Now choose for yourselves how much God shall bless you. * * *

SERMON II.

BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING.

Philippians, iv., 6, 7.—Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things, was Paul's motto. No man knows this in theory. Great were the troubles and sorrows he had to encounter. They increased upon him; but if he had increase of *sorrows*, he had increase of *joy*. Jesus Christ always caused him to triumph in every place, and hence he could say to his dear Philippians, "Rejoice in the Lord *always*," in every trial. With the eye of his faith contemplating the yet greater sufferings they should be called to endure, he says, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." It is difficult to express in one English word the force of the original, "the yielding up of yourselves." The sturdy oak, which has stood the shocks of two hundred years, meets at last with a tempest unusually violent; refusing to yield to the storm, it is

shivered by the lightning or torn up by the tempest ; but the gentle willow bends to the blast and is saved ; this is the idea : as though the apostle had said, now do not be stubborn under your persecutions ; it will but increase the fury of your enemies ; but bend, yield yourselves ; let all your enemies see it ; it will be the most effectual way ; the storm will blow over you, you shall not suffer by the blast. “ *The Lord is at hand ;*” he is just at the door, waiting to avenge his own elect. Stubborn resistance has always fed the monster *persecution*. But they might reply, “ Is not suffering, suffering still ? Can we be insensible under it ? We cannot but feel.” Now the apostle says, “ Be careful for nothing ; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

“ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

In these words we have pointed out to us one of the greatest evils of the human heart, and also its cure. The evil is an incessant concern for our temporal affairs ; that overthoughtfulness which our Lord so pointedly condemns in his Sermon on the Mount. “ Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment ? Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ? Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature ? And why take ye thought for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.”—The Greek means, “ *tear your heart from it ;*” rend your heart from these earthly tendons which bind it ; loosen these bands. This is one of the greatest evils of the human heart, and most difficult to extract. (Was it not the greatest sin of the Israelites ?) Its evil consists in three things.

1. *The dishonour it reflects on God* as the moral governor of the universe. It distrusts his care of his own ; and the

man who cannot trust his God as the God of *Providence*, will not trust him as the God of *grace*. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father."

2. *In its effects on yourself.* Though it is certain it can produce no good effect nor add a cubit to the stature, yet it is indulged in, and it corrodes in the mind; having its seat in the heart, the centre, it spreads its influence over the system; and I believe ninety-nine out of one hundred of unhappy maniacs were produced by this; not to speak of the thousands cut down in their eagerness of worldly pursuits, destroying soul and body together.

3. *In its effects towards others.* The passion of envy is excited by this; I envy in others something which my covetous heart desires. I hate the person possessing it, and am therefore a murderer in my heart, and accounted as one by Him who searches the heart. Thus it leads to suicide and murder, as well as dishonouring God.

Now, blessed be God, there is a cure for this.

II. *Be careful for nothing.* As if he had said, look within; abstract yourself from the creature; retire from the world and into yourself; let the matter lie between God and you; let no third person be concerned; call not in the world as the umpire; you will need none; you will both be of the same mind; "joined to him, you will be of one spirit with the Lord;" nay, instead of calling in the world as the umpire, you shall overcome the world, put your neck on it, and slay your dire, indwelling enemy. What, then, is the remedy prescribed by him who daily proved it? "*Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God.*" Your heavenly Father careth for you.

"*Let your request be made known unto God!*" Oh! how often have you refused this advice; you have scattered your cares to the four winds, or you have hid them in your own heart; you have permitted the worm to feed upon the bud; perhaps you have thought, I can do nothing else. The wife has said, oh! if I had a religious husband, how would I

blend my soul with his ; but, alas for me, he has no religious sympathy ! or the husband says, oh ! if my wife were a helpmeet, what solace should I have ! while the child exclaims, oh ! if my parents were but godly ! But if you have not found sympathy in the domestic circle, probably you have unbosomed yourself to a friend ; it may be he was a worldly friend, and he suffered you to show him your bleeding heart, and yet refused you any sympathizing balm ! You leaned on earth, but the reed broke ! You leaned on earth, but the spear pierced you more and more, making a deeper and yet deeper wound. But suppose your friend be sincere, yet he cannot go with you far enough ; he may walk part of the gloomy path, but as the clouds gather he leaves you. There is a point at which all human friendships terminate : “ I can go no farther with my friend.” There is none you can get to enter into your soul ; the workings of secret anxiety and its sorrowful forebodings are too big for utterance ; you have apprehensions which you cannot explain.

But, thank God, “ there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother,” and he allows you to come to him when all human joys have fled. There is a wonderful effect produced by human sympathies ; and shall not a greater effect be produced by Divine ? He can be “ touched !” the Godman, your brother ! “ His bowels melt with love.” He sees the whole soul naked and open ; he hears the inexplicable groan, and enters into all your feelings, for he knows whereof you are made. I fear we do not sufficiently value a throne of grace ; we rather tell our sorrows to any one than Him ! and yet see his love ! “ Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee ;” and see how great the condescension ; he stoops to ask your friendship ! and it is the very nature of Divine friendships to have no reserves.

“ *In prayer.*” No other way of approaching him ; no other means will do ; it is only prayer that throws off the load. Prayer, says Chrysostom, is the flight of the soul into the bosom of God ! Yes ; the dove is pursued, dangers increase, no possibility of escape is left ; but she flies into the

breast of her Lord ; there she is safe. It is in this exercise, alone the Christian is conqueror. Satan can blind in any other way, but a soul engaged with the Deity, talking with him face to face, presents a sight which Satan shudders to behold ; he can throw no cloud between, nor any mound to eclipse his glory : the soul at audience with the Deity ! here it is strong ! here it is conqueror ! Jesus sympathizes, and carries the cross with him. Strong in the Lord, we rise from our knees, saying, we will not fear what man can do unto us, for the Lord God is our strength.

“ *And supplication.*” Prayer brings the plea, supplication urges it ; the soul brings the request to God, and refuses to withdraw it ; though it may not be immediately granted, yet it is urged again and again. God often permits this ; he will try your faith ; he will appear as though he heard you not ; he will put you off a long time. “ But shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them ?” He will often bear long, and perhaps your faith begins to fail and hope expire while you cry, “ *O Lord, how long ?*” Yes ; he may suffer you to collect the wood, to ascend the mount, to build the altar, to lay the wood in order ; nay, to bind your Isaac, and even stretch forth your hand to slay your son ! he may try you to the *uttermost* ! But though he bear long, he will avenge them ! when your faith is unshaken, even “ though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation ;” he will deliver. He may refuse the widow’s cry for a long time, but he will deliver her at last ; his name is yet Jehovah-jireh : when the last extremity was come a ram was caught in the thicket :

“ God hears their sighs and counts their tears,
And shall lift up their head.”

“ *With thanksgiving :*” gratitude in the heart. This should always accompany our prayers ; indeed, the very privilege of addressing him ought to inspire this ! it is implied in prayer ; prayer has always for its foundation the promises of

God! and these very promises are matter of ceaseless thanksgiving (it also is a cause of thanksgiving that our case is no worse).

“*In everything.*” Perhaps you say, in things of great moment I do unbosom my soul to him, and my griefs; but in small trials I count it presumption. God looks not at your griefs in this comparative way; it is *man's* to compare things with one another, it is *God's* to see things as they are; he never compares them. Many believe in a *general*, but deny a *particular*, Providence; yet this is absurd, for the general is made up of particulars, as particles form the aggregate. He looks not on things as little or as great. He is careful of the least of his creatures as well as of the high archangel next his throne; in him they all live, and he loves everything that he has made! Hear what himself says: “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and yet not one of these little birds is forgotten before God.” But he goes lower, and counts it no degradation of his majesty to interest himself in the most perishable substances: Look at the lily, void of life, a fading flower; yet my Father clothes the lilies of the field! Could he go lower? Yes, he has descended to the lowest; a very hair of my head—so insignificant a thing—cannot perish without him! they are all numbered! “He sees the hero and the sparrow fall!”

Will you, after this, talk of little trials, unworthy of his notice? O! be not deceived by voluntary humility. Carry them *all*; in *everything*.

But other reasons might be assigned. Little things are often of the greatest importance; some of the mightiest revolutions in the civil or religious world have begun with little things; and so important does God behold little things, that, to encourage the sincere seeker after his love, though yet unable to discern the light, “he will not despise the day of small things.” A little sin will damn a soul—a little grace employed will raise to glory.—His kingdom commenced as a grain of mustard seed—a little leaven, &c. A little care kept in the heart will corrupt as a canker.

“*And the peace of God,*” &c. Go and learn what that means. It passes human understanding because it is the

peace of God, and is of his own nature. This will keep the heart in peace, for it is stayed on God and trusts in his word. The storm of worldly care or anxiety must bow to *His* power who said to the natural elements, "*Peace, be still!*" and there will be a *great* peace—a *great* calm; the winds and the sea will obey him! No worldly care will keep its reign when Jesus fills the breast! And oh! how great the change! peace of God! Though the highest hills of earthly hopes are covered; though the mountain tops should not be seen, yet the ark is above the water floods; and in that ark the soul finds rest. But how shall I express the change! it is unspeakable; when it takes possession,

"Not a wave of trouble rolls
Across this peaceful breast."

"*Shall keep,*" &c. A military term: our hymn says, surround, sustain, and strengthen. It will keep as a fortress; it will be the guard of your *hearts* and *minds*, your affections and understandings; everything which can affect your spiritual estate; and as to your bodies, though the storm might rise so high as to crush the tabernacle of your devoted spirit—as in Stephen's case—yet heaven shall open before you.

"*Through Christ Jesus.*" Here is the centre; here we are at rest. It is surprising how the apostle continually revolves round this glorious sun. Though in certain parts of his orbit he may appear to leave it, it is but for a moment. Jesus is all his theme, and he literally knows nothing else but Jesus, and him crucified. (See Morgan.) Your prayers and supplications are to go to God, but it is through Christ; it is his altar sanctifies the gift: your thanksgivings go to him likewise, but he is the sanctifier even of them. The peace of God then returns through the same medium—by *Christ Jesus*. * * * Now here is the evil; here, too, is the cure, and it shall not fail; for St. Paul, who had *tried and proved* every truth of God, says it *shall keep*. If you make the venture on this truth, it shall make you *free*: free from all distraction, you will be careful for nothing.

"Commit thou all thy griefs,
Hope and be undismayed."

I preach to suffering saints, for they are always to be found in greater abundance than any other character except sinners. I pray God that St. Paul's motto may be yours; and thus I *end* as I *began*.

SERMON III.

THE DIGNITY AND OFFICE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

2 Corinthians, v., 20.—Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

I. THE Dignity.

II. The office of the Christian Ministry.

I. "*Ambassadors for God.*" An ambassador is a person sent by a sovereign power to treat with some people or nation on matters of the highest importance; he represents the majesty of the country from which he is so sent. This is beautifully applied to the ministers of Christ, and will bear some analogy.

1. The ambassadors of a human prince must be the well-trying friends of the kingdom they represent. A monarch would send no other; much less would he choose him out of the number of his enemies. The interest of the king and kingdom must lie near his heart, or how can he hope for success.

So with the ambassador of heaven! he must be the well-trying friend of God! An immoral clergy were never sent by God; they are enemies to his kingdom, and he would not employ them as negotiators. *His* ambassadors have often to apply for advice in difficult cases; but who shall for this purpose ascend, like Moses, into the hill of the Lord? Even he *only* who has clean hands and a pure heart! To any others he says, what have you to do to profane my name?—ye make my people to err. He who has not been the well-trying friend of God, and whose heart is not filled with that melting and bleeding compassion which is possessed by the majesty he professes to represent, towards the creature, is not the ambassador of God.

2. The ambassador must be well conversant with the institutes of the kingdom he represents, its constitution and its laws. The original word for ambassador is *presbuteroi*, *elders*: they are not to be novices in Divine things; no earthly king sends such.

3. He must be accredited; he must have the seals of office, and be able to give satisfactory testimonials from the king he represents. So the ambassador of God; he is God's immediate minister; from *Him* he derives his commission, and *His* credentials he must produce. The outward separation to the ministry by ordination is but *man's* work, and supposes the previous appointment of God. Oh! how solemn the declaration, "I am inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take this office and ministry." The call, then, is of God; and, without such a call, man's appointment is of no efficacy. It was an evil day for the Church when any others were appointed to the ministry than such as were thus moved. Human learning is useful to the Christian minister; it facilitates his ministry, and should be attended to; but it is not absolutely indispensable. I do not condemn *it*; but I condemn its being substituted for *Divine* knowledge, and made the *only* qualification for admission to the most sacred office. (See Morgan.) They are not the credentials of human literature which he is to display, but rather the seal of the Holy Ghost—his commission from God. The Holy Ghost must inwardly move him to that great work; and any minister who has not this broad seal of Heaven upon his credentials is a hypocrite; he shall have his *reward here*, but the *punishment hereafter*.

4. Some ambassadors are sent *plenipotentiary* to other courts; invested with *full powers* to do as they see fitting in any case; and their act, being regarded as the act of the monarch, is binding. But these are exempt cases; they generally have the line of their duty prescribed to them, and they cannot go beyond it; unlimited powers are not put into their hands. So the ambassador of Christ. He has the line of duty marked out and its boundaries prescribed, and he dare not add to or diminish from it: the monarch whom he represents cannot be affected by human contingencies; he

has made provision for every case, and not one word or iota needs adding to, or expunging from, the rule laid down. The apostles, indeed, appeared sometimes as plenipotentiaries: circumstances in their day required it; but the sacred canon being now completed under the inspiration of God, we have not power to traverse out of it. * * * *
 No church (Roman), therefore, has power to add or vary anything in the Christian faith unless she prove by *miracles* that she has the right: no infringement was ever made on any dispensation without this witness, and these miracles must exceed any that have preceded them. Till this proof is given, we have a right to bring their *credos* and *auto da fés* to this test, and reject as spurious the rubbish of human invention; for we dare not be of the number of those who corrupt the word of God.

Now we inquire, first, What is the cause of all this? "*All things are of God.*" 1. Actually. 2. Meritoriously.
 1. *Actually.* He is the *mover* and the *end* of all! the first and the last. *How* actually? Because, says the text, "*He has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.*" There is a peculiar feature in the character of sin which we sometimes overlook: it not only is the evidence of enmity in us against our God, and increases that enmity, but it is the cause of displeasure towards us on the part of God. Think not that thou shalt have a right to sin against thy God, and he wink at thy aggravations. No; sin is not that little thing some suppose: it draws down the wrath of Heaven upon thy head! Shalt thou be at liberty to fight against thy God, and shall he not fight against thee? Yea, verily; God will not relax his claims on thee, even though thou shouldst attempt to throw them off. Thou mayst refuse subjection, but he will not refuse his claim on thy subjection. Sin, then, is of the most horrid nature; it makes war in heaven; not only puts thee at enmity with thy God, but him at enmity with thee. But he has reconciled himself to us by Jesus Christ; and not us only, but *the world*: the world of human nature; all whose nature Christ assumed; for he took not the nature of angels, but *flesh*, and all who are partakers of that nature

which he assumed are the objects of reconciliation. But how did he reconcile?

2. *Meritoriously.* He made him to be a sin-offering who knew no sin, &c. There is a beautiful opposition in the whole of this passage. *God made Christ to be sin*—a sin-offering—that *we* sinners might be made the *righteousness* of God in him. By *righteousness* here is meant the entire sanctification of our natures; not the removing the penalty, but destroying the principle: anything short of this would not be worthy of the name Gospel. If I were to have the offer of pardon and heaven, and yet the principle of sin remaining, I would prefer hell having this *principle* of sin removed and suffering for my guilt (if it were possible), rather than have heaven with the guilt pardoned and the principle remaining; for the soul *cannot* take pleasure in anything unsuitable to its own disposition. Bring a peasant among philosophers, he prefers his humble cot; bring a libertine among a society noted for chastity, he longs for the scenes of debauchery; so the joys of bliss are no joy but to the soul prepared by similar dispositions for their reception. Again: as far as Adam fell, so far are we restored *even here*, and much farther hereafter. Christ is our second Adam, and we are to be made the righteousness of God *in him*; in and through him we are to stand, as in and through Adam we fell! Behold, then, sinner, the mighty work which has been done *for* thee; but behold also the mighty work which must be done *in* thee. Thou hast been redeemed by price; but this price was paid to purchase the *power* of the Holy Ghost to be exerted in thee mightily; and if the power of God have not wrought the change in thy nature, the price paid for thee will but enhance thy condemnation. Then thy cry will be, I might have been saved, but would not; now I would, but cannot. * * * Now how was this effected? *God was in Christ.* Allusion is here made to sacrifice, by which men entered into covenant with God. Indeed, a sacrifice was reckoned a covenant; now behold the victim; the human nature of Christ, pure, spotless, sinless. *God was in Christ*: the Divine nature offered up the human; there is one party, now where is the other? *We* are in Christ also!

how fine! Our human nature is there also, and at this shrine we can meet God! Now at this shrine God does not impute our sins to us; by the offering he is reconciled to us, and covers our iniquities.

II. But now it remains, "*Be ye reconciled to God.*" Two ways of attaining this. 1. Put away sin. 2. Take hold by faith.

1. God has put away sin from before him, and thou must meet him, putting it from thee. He has dipped the pen of mercy in the blood of the cross, and stained the lines of justice against thee, and there is no record now before his throne but the blood of Christ. But wilt thou not meet him? Oh! I tremble for the man living in sin and lust, despising the riches of God's grace. Thou art sinning against thy only remedy, and for this God will adjudge thee to eternal death. *Remember!* if thou sin against the remedy offered in Christ, "there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary." He will come again with power and great glory, but it will be without a sin-offering. Christ is now thy covenant and sacrifice, but he will then be thy sovereign and judge! Oh! sinner, I can already behold the awful scene; I hear the archangel's voice, "Arise, ye dead, and come." Where? to *judgment!* See the bursting graves; the great white throne moved forward by ten thousand times ten thousand angels; see the books opened, the judge set! Behold! the judge himself appears, clothed with a girdle from head to foot, his eyes as a flame of fire, his feet like burnished brass, his raiment white and glistening, his countenance as the sun shining in his strength, his voice as the sound of many waters, yea, as mighty thunderings. I see the tomb casts thee forth—refuses to hide thy sinful dust; thine eyes open; thou wast not dead, but sleeping; and now thou art awakened to sleep no more forever. I see thy vast surprise; I hear thy hollow groan, thy piercing cry; thou rendest heaven with thy shrieks! * * * Is that the babe of Bethlehem! Lord! Lord! open unto us. Thou art called to the bar; thy crimes are read; plead *now* his blood. Thou pleadest "Jesus;" he says, "*I am he.*" But

thou drawest backward and fallest—down to hell! Thy mouth is stopped; his blood cries against thee; thou trampledst it beneath thy feet; in time thou wast heard exclaiming, “His blood be on me,” and now the Judge says, “My blood be on thee forever—ever!” See, sinner, devils wait to drag thy soul away. This *will be* thy ease; hazard not the experiment; be wise in time; flee from thy sins; cut off, pluck out, tear the idol from thy breast, even though it should leave a bleeding heart behind; confess thy sins, and return unto the Lord!

2. Take hold by faith. Now, having prepared thy heart, touch the victim. God is in Christ—meet thou in Christ; put forth thy hand! enter into covenant; strike hands with God. Believe that he is reconciled to thee! Pray not for God to devise a plan of reconciliation, but believe he *has* done it; and do thou lay thy sins at the foot of the altar, and take hold of God through the humanity of Jesus; appropriate his merits to thy individual case, as the scapegoat, &c. * * * * * And now, having acted as the ambassador of Christ, allow me to display the character of the Christian minister towards man—your *servant* for Christ’s sake: we *beseech* you; knowing his terrors, we would *persuade* you; and if I should never have to speak to you again, I wash my hands in innocency. I have delivered my soul! I am clear of your blood! I *beseech* you!

But though, for a moment, we stoop thus, we rise again: “*As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.*” It is God that speaks through us; and is it, then, all of grace? Yes; *grace! grace!* Christ himself beseeches; he has all the glory. Oh! hear, and your souls shall live! *In Christ’s stead*: we stand in the place of Christ; if he filled the pulpit this night, and spake without any instrument, you would be *constrained* and not *persuaded*; but he delights to reward you as moral agents, although the reward will be of grace! Oh! then, *for Christ’s sake* * * * By the mystery of his holy incarnation, come to “*God through him*;” come and embrace God. By the mystery of his cross, be crucified with him; by his blood, sprinkled on your hearts by faith!

for Christ's sake! If not for Christ's sake, come *for your own sake*; love yourself. Now is the time. I see the cross exalted; I see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of God; I see him pointing to Calvary; I hear his voice: "I suffered this for thee." (Picture this.) And shall the cries of mercy ascend for thee, and wilt not thou ask for thyself? *Oh! for Christ's sake!* Some of you *will* join hands with God to-night—(Jay); but of others I might say, "Oh! that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." Well, whether thou hear or forbear, we shall yet be a "sweet savour unto God, even in them that believe and in them that perish."

SERMON IV.

SPIRITUAL IDOLATRY.

Hosea, iv., 17.—Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

THE term Ephraim is not applied barely to the tribe of that name, but to all men; for all Scripture was written for our reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. * * * * *

I. Consider the awful assertion, Ephraim is joined to idols.

No need to go back to Ephraim's time to find idolatry, where men bowed the knee of the body; it is possible to be idolaters at *heart*, though the body may be bowed to the true object of worship.

Consider, therefore, what God means by the term idolaters. It is admitted by all that he who had any part in our formation has a right to a part of our worship; and it is not unreasonable that a Being who had the greatest share in our formation should have most of our worship. But God was our sole Creator: He made us, and not we ourselves. Who has been his counsellor? It is therefore reasonable that He should have the whole of that worship for which he

made us ; for we are not our own. The requisition of God, then, that we should love him with *all* the heart and *all* the soul, was not unreasonable ; to the child of God this commandment is not grievous : His yoke is easy and his burden is light.

Objection.—We have not now this power ; all our faculties are deranged ; our nature, our propensities, evil ; all our affections earthly.

Answer.—This does not affect the argument. The spirit in us lusts to envy ; God gives *more grace*. He gives a greater measure of grace to counteract the evil principle ; and the man who will calmly examine his own heart will feel that he is always checked in the commission of evil, and that by the same principle he is kept *uneasy* and *unhappy*, even though in the performance of outward duty, till he is made fully happy in God. If man had not the power afforded him thus to fulfil the law, God could not, consistently with *justice*, punish him, much less with that *mercy* which rejoices over judgment. If our evil propensities be thus strong, and be the effects of original evil, God could not punish us ; we were passive in the offence, and God could not inflict *active* punishment for *passive* sin. He could not judge the world in righteousness in this case ; for we had a propelling principle to evil, which was irresistible. But He who is a reasonable Being now gives as a *command* that which to Adam was a *privilege*, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” The principle which we receive, therefore, to do good, is at least *as strong* as the evil one, and there is no man who does evil but could by the same power avoid doing it.

As the Creator, therefore, has a *right* to all our worship, any dereliction is called idolatry—when we allow any other love to possess our souls but the love of God *pre-eminently*. This truth allowed, the character must attach to some of us ; we are idolaters. To fasten that epithet upon us, it is not necessary that we fall down before an image. Every man has some one single object which he loves and pursues more than any other ; this is his idol, be it what it may ;

however lawful he may regard it, he is guilty of idolatry. That object which has the greatest share of your attention and affection is your idol, and I need not attempt to particularize the various idolaters : pleasure-takers, &c.

Has this world, or the world to come, most of your *thoughts*? Have the things of this world, or those of the world to come, most of your *affections*? Perhaps you say, "I keep all things in their proper place. God has not left me here to be idle." I admit 'it; but whether has He or these things the greatest share in your heart? Stifle not conscience; if it accuse, do not palliate. If you ask the inward monitor, it will inform you. That you may not deceive yourselves, answer the following question: If you had your choice offered you by God, to live in this world forever with all your possessions, or to die and be with Him forever, which would you accept? You know you would choose this world. It follows that in it is your heart bound up; you are an *idolater* in the sight of God!

Now of *you*, as well as of Ephraim, God says, "he is joined to idols," cemented together. God utters not this indifferently; it is not unconcernedly addressed. He still mournfully calls them "*my people*," and the endearing name of *Israel* brings all to his recollection. So with us. They were no people; even those who bear my name, they are now joined to idols.

II. "Let him alone!" When God says this, how awful.

1. He ceases chastising him; ceases sending him cross providences. The wicked are now left *to prosper*; why should they be stricken any more? they will only revolt more and more. God often loosened the roots which bound them to the world; he often disappointed them in their prospects in life, that they might not take too deep a root in earth; he often corrected them with sickness in their own persons or in their families, to show them the little dependance to be placed on all things here. Men do not look at this; they do not mind this; they do not read, "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;" they heed none of these things. They would not think of him in health; in love to their

souls, he sent them sickness : then they murmured under it, and kicked against their God. He again raised them up ; he gave them worldly good : they forgot the Giver. He took it away ; they repined ; they were as bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke. He fed them as in his own stall ; He gave them his easy yoke of duties, which ought to have been lovely ; they would not draw in it. By gentle treatment, he goaded them ; they kicked against the prieks, and were, as himself says, “ a *backsliding heifer*.” “ I will chastise no more ; let him alone ; let the wicked prosper in his ways ; let him live sumptuously ; let his roots strike deep and extend wide ; let him fill himself with his own devices ; let him alone ; let him be in great prosperity ; his heart is set on earth ; he shall therefore bow himself down alway. *Let him alone !*”

2. God the Father, besides this his own act of chastising, commands his angels to forsake him ! We walk in the invisible world : if the veil were removed, what should we see bursting on our minds ? We are surrounded by evil spirits, and, but for the counteracting agency of those angels, who are all ministering spirits from God, our circumstances would be horrible ! But the sinner has refused salvation ; he cares not for the adoption or the glory ! God, therefore, commands these spirits to withdraw their influence. This he does not in petulance or passion ; no such feeling can exist in him ; but *justice* requires it. The solemn message echoes in heaven, “ Let him alone !” and angels hear the plaintive strain, give a last look, and bid farewell ! “ No more your guardian care his steps attend !” Farewell ! “ let him alone !” * * * * *

3. Even *God the Son* now ceases his office. He had long prayed, “ Father, spare him this year also !” Love had long been exercised ; mercy rejoiced over judgment. But the time was now come of which he had said, “ *Then* thou shalt cut him down ! I now deliver him up to *thee* ; *thou* mayst do with him now as *thou* pleasest.” Though I have long prayed for him, it is useless ; “ let him alone !” * *

4. *God the Spirit* now ceases to act. “ God’s Spirit does not *always* strive with man ;” the Spirit has become quench-

ed. He has long been striving for admittance into his heart, he has long been knocking without, and saying, "Open unto me; behold, my locks are wet with the dew of night;" but he has despised him, and God now says, "Let him alone!" There is a particular time in every man's life in which God is peculiarly zealous in drawing the soul; that time may be about to pass with regard to many of you! * * *

He is now an independent being! he is now "like God," as the devil temptingly said to our first parents; and oh! what is a creature independent! God, who takes care even of sparrows, now ceases to regard him; he is a blank in creation; forsaken of his God and of his all! * *

III. The awful consequences. Look at the man who is now given up of God!

1. How would you gaze upon the unhappy character if produced? but what if thou art thyself the man? No longer the concern of Heaven! Angels have left the once happy station and office of ministering to such a one! Infernal spirits alone surround him! They rivet the chains of sin; they keep him bound; laugh at the prospect of his now being theirs, and exult over his fall. He was destined to be an heir of glory, and for this purpose once had ministering spirits; now he is an heir of hell, and is ministered unto by devils! His name, instead of being written in the Book of Life, is now written in the Book of Death. Chained by them to the galley of sin, he toils at the oar, works for Satan, and is paid his wages—*eternal death!*

2. He has no longer any interest in the intercession of Christ. "He has long withstood his grace, long provoked him to his face!" like his father the devil, an outcast from Heaven, reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Like the enemy, his *head* is full of *light*, but his *heart* is unchanged, and his light adds to his condemnation.

3. No longer any sweet meltings of desire after Heaven! no longer any drawings of the Father, under which he could mourn and weep his life away for having grieved his love. No longer a conscience tender as the apple of an eye—it is seared as with a hot iron; a walking spectre! a condemned

criminal waiting the hour of his execution! Dead while he lives! cursed with blindness of mind as well as hardness of heart. He comes to hear God's word sometimes, merely from an itching of curiosity; he hears the terrors of God's wrath held forth; he hears there is a hell; he hears there is a gnawing worm, a quenchless fire, and he knows that the God of Truth has declared it; but he is dead to all. His conscience is so hardened that the word *rebounds* from it as from a wall; it leaves no impression. He hears the sweet strains of a blood-bought salvation held up to his view; he sees the affecting exhibitions of a Redeemer's love, and hears that he may feel that love shed abroad in his *heart*; but still he feels no meltings under the word; his heart is flint and his eyes are dry; he goes away regardless of the joys of heaven or the torments of hell. Ah! miserable soul! no longer any convictions; and yet this is the surest proof of his fall!

4. Thus he lives, and now he comes to die—no hope beyond the grave. He now begins to fear a judgment to come; and, to quiet his accusing conscience, perhaps partakes of the elements of the body and blood of the Saviour, but it is without any acquaintance with him. He was not his one great good while alive, and now he mocks him in the agonies of death! He has no guardian angels in his chamber; "the good man's chamber is a spot favoured beyond the common walks of mortal life;" but *here* all is sullen gloom. Devils themselves hold guard, watching for the last gasp, and ready to drag his spirit to its awful doom. Ah! deluded man! "God now laughs at thy calamity, and mocks when thy fear cometh!" (Pope's case at Bolton.) * *

5. And now his last scene comes on; the judgment is set and the books opened! The devil anxiously brings his miserable captives, while the angels of God fly through the flaming world to gather the children of God: but behold the emissaries of Satan with this man! Satan heard the decree passed condemning him on earth; he saw its execution fulfilled by the departure of the angels of God from his person, and he now tauntingly insults the man; and, as winged seraphs dart along to carry the faithful, Satan cries,

“Let *him* alone! *he* is mine, and mine he shall ever be!”
 The awful sentence is pronounced, “Depart, thou cursed,
 into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”
 Christ had often said “Come;” now, “Depart!” * *

Application.—Examine yourselves; I have not the power; but know ye not your own selves whether ye are reprobates? I hold out no gleam of hope! I do not say what you may be; but, sinner, I would fasten on thy present state, *Thou art the man!* What part of hell shall be punishment sufficient for Gospel-hardened sinners! It is not the religion of your fathers that will save *you*; it is not the religion of your ministers, however great may be their piety. You must answer for yourself. By yourself you shall stand or fall! and it will not do to appeal to this or that man as the person to whom you looked for aid, and who has led you astray.

And are you not concerned? Shall the deceivableness of the wicked one still overspread your minds? Are you well pleased to drag out your existence here, and then to drop into hell? Can you lie in your beds in this state? You know not how soon you may be cut down; you know not how soon death may come. Oh! awake, awake! * *

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SERMON V.

THE SAVIOUR INTERCEDING.

Hebrews, vii., 25.—Seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

THIS subject not sufficiently thought upon by us, nor dwelt on by ministers. * * * *

I. The office itself which our Lord is represented as sustaining.

II. The purposes for which he sustains it.

III. We may add an improvement of the whole.

I. There are three offices which Christ sustains in reference to the salvation of men, *prophetical*, *sacerdotal*, and *regal*. These comprehend all that he has done, is doing, and will do, in reference to our salvation, until the mediatorial kingdom be given up.

Intercession is part of the sacerdotal office. "To intercede" means to go between one person and another, and address one on behalf of another; and in Scripture, to make such address to God. St. John is a commentator on this: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." This affords some illustration of the intercession of Christ.

But the *manner* in which it is conducted is perhaps best seen by the office of the Jewish high-priest—typical. When he had slain the victim he took the blood into the holy place. Jesus having suffered on earth, produces and pleads his sufferings in heaven. He has not entered into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, and there continually presents that humanity, with all the marks of his wounds, before the Father, endured in obedience to the Father's will. St. John saw a lamb slain. (Query, Whether Christ's intercession be *vocal*. Scriptures have not said. John, xvii., and Psalm ii. "Ask of me." Incline to this opinion.)

The necessity of this intercession is obvious. His death is the *procuring cause* of redemption, but it is in virtue of his *life*, and that an *intercessory* life, that we become possessed of the benefits of that redemption: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Hence *this* life will be continued as long as the present state of grace and mercy lasts. This is the doctrine of the text.*

This mediation and intercession is a truth revealed in Scripture, and accords with the general sense of mankind. Most nations have some tutelary, intercessory, subordinate god. Men, generally, have been sensible that they were sinners and liable to punishment; that their own merit was insufficient, and that they needed a higher Mediator to plead

* See Clarke, in loco.

their cause. This relief, which the heathen sought after in vain, is revealed in Christ, a real Mediator, with such qualifications as give satisfaction and encouragement to all who come to God by him. His divinity gives infinite merit and efficacy to his pleadings; and possessing also the human nature, affords ground to believe he will undertake, with tenderness and compassion, the cause of man.

II. The purposes for which he sustains the office of mediation and intercession.

1. For the suspension of merited punishment and the extension of our probationary existence.

Our obligations to the Saviour are not considered aright, even by the serious. How is it that we live on trial *at all*? that we, as sinners condemned to that wrath, are placed under the *possibility* of deliverance? How is it that the sentence is so far reversed that we are in circumstances of mercy and hope? The intercession of Christ—and every day we live increases the sum of our obligations. Have we not forfeited life a thousand times? It is a life in which we are on trial for eternity. Have the things of eternity uniformly impressed and regulated us? It is a life in which pardon and heaven have been all along offered us. Have we laboured to secure the one and prepare for the other? It is a life in which the Lord of the universe has intrusted us with certain talents, various in kind, and has said, “occupy till I come.” Has it been our first concern? I appeal to your judgments—nay, to your memories and consciences. What have been the reflections with which you have often closed your years? What but lamenting your unfaithfulness, lukewarmness, undue influence of the world; and that where attachments should be *greatest* they are *least*. At such times, have you not deprecated the Divine displeasure, which you were persuaded must be excited? Have you not acknowledged that you had forfeited your life of grace and probation, and that it would be just in God if he were to cut you down and swear in his wrath that you should never enter into his rest? Why is that *punishment suspended* and your life prolonged? “*He ever liveth to make intercession for us.*” You may say it is owing to the long suffering of

God, but this is preserved by the intervention of Christ. The parable of the barren fig-tree. * * * For how many years has the intercessor pressed the plea, "*This year also.*" Ye hearers of the Gospel! ye professing Christians! ye Methodists! ye on whom so much culture has been bestowed, but who have disappointed the reasonable expectations of the Lord of the vineyard, how could you have arrested the course of justice when it cried, "*Cut him down!*" Oh! see the prevalency of his intercession, that, after all your barrenness, you are still spared. It is because he has power with God and prevails, and *solely* because of this, that you are out of hell, and now living upon trial.

2. For the continuance of the economy of grace in the Church, and the supply of spiritual influence to the minds of men. This is necessary to help in improving our extended probation. We may live, but no amendment, no salvation wrought out, unless by an influence *within* and assisted by the means *without*. What is the condition of him from whom the Holy Spirit is withdrawn, and who is abandoned to the terrible effects of "*Let him alone?*" *Deplorable! desperate—past remedy.* And have we not reason to fear it in the case of those who have so long resisted? And are there not instances in the history of the Church in which the Gospel has been withdrawn for unprofitableness? Where are the Asiatic churches? The besom of destruction has passed over them. * * * *

Now the government of the Church and succession of faithful ministers are in the hands of Jesus as *Mediator*; "For the Father hath put all things under his feet and made him head over all things to the Church." But the administration he exercises over it is not in right of his *natural sovereignty* as "*God over all*;" it is in virtue of his *Mediatorship*. Do not lose sight of this; we are all lost, but placed under an administration of *mercy*, a constitution of *grace*, under the dominion of his *Son as Mediator*. The continuance of this merciful administration—our Sabbaths, ministers, sacraments, throne of grace—all depend on the mediation of our High-priest, in the immediate presence of the Majesty on high. He received gifts for men, even the rebellious; and

St. Paul says, "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

To the same cause is to be attributed the continual supply of the Spirit's influence to the minds of individuals. The gift of this Divine agent resulted from the mediation of Christ. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you. I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.—Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost." And if this same Holy Ghost still strive with *you*, to give you a knowledge of yourselves; to fix a concern for Divine things; to strip you of *self*, and bring you, in all the nakedness of simple faith, to the foot of the Redeemer's cross, it is because that Redeemer is still acting for you as mediator in the court of heaven: "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

3. For the pardon and salvation of the most reprobate and guilty. So Isaiah tells us in that admirable prophecy of the mediatorial work of Christ with which the whole of his fifty-third chapter is engrossed. "He made intercession for the transgressors." Of such intercession the Redeemer gave a most illustrious specimen when, in the midst of his agonies on the cross, he exclaimed, "*Father, forgive them.*" If Christ died for the salvation of *all*, his intercession is carried on for the benefit of *all*; for such is the connexion between the two grand branches of the priestly office, that the salvation of our fallen spirits cannot be effected but as they are interested in *both*. I do not now agitate the question of the *extent* of Christ's death. That he tasted death for every man, I now assume as a Scriptural proposition; and that he makes intercession *for every man*, follows, I contend, as a *necessary consequence*, because it is indispensably necessary to put them in actual possession of its benefits. O! ye careless, *consider* the mercy of the Son of God; be *astonished, relent, break* your hearts under a sense of it.

If anything can move to seriousness and concern, it is this: "Father, forgive them." Oh listen to his pleadings *for* you, and yield to his pleadings *in* you. But to *penitents*, how full of encouragement! He intercedes for the pardon of all who *have been* most reprobate, but are *now* coming to God by him. *Take confidence*; you are interested; he sees your bitter reflections and remorseful feelings; vilely as you have treated him, he has no wish to put you to unnecessary pain; he beholds your groans, sighs, and tears; he knows you can make no reparation, and he *requires* none; he has bought you a pardon by his blood, and, while presenting that blood above for you, he pours in *effectual* prayer, "*Father, forgive!*" Believe, and you shall "go down justified."

4. That our persons and services may be acceptable to God. Hence St. Paul: "Through him we have access by one spirit unto the Father." Some of the opposers of Christian doctrine say that our worshipping God through a mediator is derogatory to the Divine goodness, calculated to lead into a neglect of God the Father, and is a sort of indecency when we consider ourselves always in his presence. I answer, remember,

1. That, in everything relating to Christ as the mediator of our approaches, we are to consider him as *graciously appointed* for this purpose *by God himself*, and that the goodness of the Supreme Being is wondrously displayed in this constitution by which his guilty creatures are imboldened in their addresses.

2. That the Christian scheme requires us not to *terminate* our regards in the Mediator *as such*, but to address God through him.

3. That it is so far from being an indecency to approach a sovereign by the person he appoints to introduce us to him, that, if such an appointment be made, it is insulting to come directly and immediately to him. In reference to the Almighty, this is a consideration with which our minds cannot be *too solemnly impressed*. There is no warrant in all the New Testament to come on *any* occasion, for anything, but through the *mediation of his Son*. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Nay, the man who does not

worship God in this way does not worship him *at all*; he is left without God; and whatever he may call himself, his God is a mere idol of the *imagination*, which has no corresponding *reality* in the whole universe of being. "Who-so denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. Seeing then that we have a great High-priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession," for we have "boldness, and access with confidence, through the faith of him."

You have thanksgivings to offer unto God, and never ought you to ask for fresh supplies until you have presented your praises for those with which you are already indulged. Offer yours as Paul did: "I thank God *through* Jesus Christ our Lord." You have *petitions* to make for yourselves and *supplications* for others; however unworthy, those petitions are of the Divine notice on account of your feebleness, distractions, and unfaithfulness; if made in *his* name who ever liveth to make intercession for us, they will receive the most suitable and gracious attention. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Some of you employ yourselves in a variety of ways for God; you feel it at once your duty and your pleasure to serve him and your generation; but you see that meanness and imperfection attach to all your performances. When you have done all, you are unprofitable servants. Nor is there a single thing for which you can expect a reward independent of the merit of the Saviour. But the great High-priest over the house of God introduces both your persons and services to the Father, and, relying on his intercession, you are accepted in the Beloved.

This leads us to observe,

5. The intercession of Christ embraces in a very special manner the interests of his people.

While it has so important a reference to the salvation of *all*, in obtaining a larger space of trial and continuing his Holy Spirit; and while it has respect to the pardon of the most guilty, it is carried on more particularly and delightfully for the welfare of those who are in union with him, and to whom he has become wisdom and righteousness. Taking his

prayer on the night in which he was betrayed as a pattern of his intercession before the throne, we see that *everything* connected with the happiness of his followers is an object of his advocacy. Need they preservation? Indeed they do; for, whatever their condition or attainments, they are beset by enemies, and their own infirmities render them unequal to their defence; but hear: "Holy Father, keep, through thy own name, those whom thou hast given me. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." Need they sanctification? Indeed they do. True, many are not as zealous as they ought to be in seeking it, and the *best* lament that they are not more like him who did no sin, and in whose mouth was found no guile. Well hear: "Sanctify them through thy truth." Again: What an important object is the *union* of his people? important in its influence on their individual advantage and comfort, and their mutual edification, and especially in the example it exhibits to the world. How beautiful they would appear if they were all of one heart and of one soul! and how great the force of their example! The world could not stand before them. It was so with the first believers, and *shall be again*; for it is the object of Christ's intercession: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us." To crown the whole, he intercedes for their *glorification*: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me." Attend to this language: he asks as one who has a right to be heard; for, by his obedience unto death, he has purchased *heaven itself* for us, and rendered our introduction into it consistent with the truth, righteousness, and law of God. Hence the Father *cannot deny* him. He raised him from the dead, and exalted his human nature in token that his sacrifice was satisfactory, and he cannot refuse the request he makes on behalf of his people, since what he asks he has *died* to procure.

III. See, then, the purposes for which Jesus lives to make intercession for us.

1. The first consideration to which we are led is the maj-

esty and holiness of God the Father. He does nothing *immediately* with man ; all is through a mediator, and with *him* we have immediately to do in the concerns of faith, holiness, and salvation. And why ? “ He is of *purer* eyes than to behold iniquity ; the unclean cannot dwell in his sight ; what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness ? ” The character of the Supreme is nowhere seen so clearly and impressively as in the sacrifice and mediatorial acts of his Son. Though much of his unapproachable grandeur was taught in sacrifices, washings, &c., yet the most solemn acts, even on the day of expiation, were only typical of what was perfected and is carrying on by the Redeemer, the only real sacrifice and prevailing intercessor : and if, on the one hand, the appointment of *him* as High-priest shows the boundless pity and benevolence of the Most High, on the other, the requisition of a sacrifice so infinitely meritorious affords the most ample and awful demonstration that “ our God is a consuming fire.”

Let this promote corresponding sentiments of reverence and Godly fear. Never allow yourselves in rash and hasty approaches to God, or unbecoming familiarities towards him. “ Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders ? ”

“ Who know his power, his grace who prove,
Serve him with awe, with reverence, love.”

2. This subject commends to us in more striking terms the love of Christ. It shows that it is *constant* and *unremitted*. It was that which induced him to undertake our redemption ; which led him to make himself of no reputation, and take upon him the form of a servant ; and, though God with God, to appear as man with man ; which led him to exhibit himself as a spectacle to angels and men, and, after all, descend to the humiliation of the *grave*—all love ! That same unconquerable love has returned with him to heaven, and still interests him in our cause ! Talk you of the *constancy* of attachment ? See it in Jesus towards those whose salvation he has at heart !

We see it is *tender* and *sympathizing*, for we have to do

with him as *still sustaining* our nature, and acquainted with all its infirmities, trials, and wants. As he *made* man, he might have been a merciful intercessor, though not made flesh himself; but *we* could not have been so fully persuaded of this. The high-priest of the law was taken from among men that he might have compassion, &c. * * * See how this applies to Jesus: "For we have not a high-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are." This opens a source for exquisite consolation; "sympathy is produced and cherished by *experience*." Who are most kind and humane? Those who have been much in the school of affliction and "in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." When you pine in *poverty*, when your heart is broken by *reproach*, when the devil tries to injure your purity and disturb your enjoyment, recollect and have confidence; He knows what all these mean, for he hath felt the same. *Experience!* oh! this is a ground of confidence indeed! We now try to arm you against the fear of death: and when death is approaching, ministers and Christians will try to support you. But we have no experience; we *do not know* what it is to die; but *one* will be near you who has passed through the trying scene, who knows the feelings of human nature in the separation of soul and body, and in leaving beloved friends and relatives, and who is able to administer all adequate and suitable consolation.

Consider also the *comprehensiveness* of the love of Christ as manifested in his intercession. It extends to everything connected with our welfare and salvation. There is not a prayer you offer, but he hears and presents it to the Father; not a duty to be discharged, but he enables you to perform it; not a blessing you need to perfect you in holiness, but he can obtain it for you; not a seat in glory, but, through his infinite merits, you may be fitted for and placed in it.

The love of Christ is a theme on which we should frequently dwell. Our love to him is the very life and soul of all our religion; and what can produce this but his love to us? "We love him, because he first loved us." O!

when we get our hearts fully into this subject, its *comprehensiveness*, *tenderness*, and *constancy*, we feel somewhat our obligations, and resolve to give our little all!

“My Saviour how shall I proclaim,
How pay the mighty debt I owe?
Let all I have and all I am
Ceaseless to all thy glory show.

“Too much to thee I cannot give,
Too much I cannot do for thee:
Let all thy love and all thy grief
Graven on my heart forever be.”

3. It is intended to impress our minds with the necessity of availing ourselves of the advocacy of Christ.

It is necessary for *every one* of us, and for every one of us *continually*. O that some of you would now for the first time put your cause into Christ's hands! O sinner, if Christ's compassion were not above the most tender mercies of man, as the heaven is above the earth, long ere this your condition would have been utterly hopeless. And shall this forbearance be *all* lost on you? Are your hearts so steeled as to resist the impression of love so amazing, so divine? Painful as it is to us on such a subject of mercy to say it, we must tell you, that even the mercy of Christ has its limits: “Lo! these three years I come seeking fruit and find none.” Lord, “let it alone this year also.” O if this reprieve expire and find you yet in your sins! Hourly your probation is drawing to a close; in a season you think not the axe may be laid to the root of the tree! O that I could prevail! Before Christ ceases to act as Mediator, accept his proffered interposition. Resolve *now*, and *here*, that you will be his. Blessed are they that trust in him.

I conclude by reminding those who do come, of the necessity of cultivating a *continual* sense of their dependance on him. If he *ever* liveth to make intercession for you, you are never safe but when you feel this is necessary, and live by faith in the Son of God. As through his mediation you are brought into a state of grace, by the same must you be *kept* and perfected in it to the end. Look to him for all needful supplies, till out of his fulness you receive grace for grace, and meetness for glory. Look at him till you are

saved to the uttermost, and till he has consummated this uttermost salvation on earth by bringing you where he now is—the true Holy of Holies—to behold his glory, and unite with “every creature which is in heaven and earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, saying, ‘Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.’”

SERMON VI.

THE RACE FOR GLORY.

Hebrews, xii., 1, 2.—Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

As it is impossible to understand any heavenly gifts otherwise than by earthly comparisons, so equally is it impossible to explain the life of a Christian but by earthly practices; the mind of man is so corrupted that it is susceptible of nothing but such objects as affect its passions or strike its senses: an awful proof, this, of our fallen state! So long as man remained upright in the image of God, the Spirit of God inhabited his own temple; and so indissoluble was the union between the Creator and the creature, that his soul was fully illumined by the glory of that Being residing in him, whose presence alone causes the light of heaven. The Shechinah of the Divine presence dwelt in man, and he had no need of parables, metaphors, or allegories to illustrate to him the happiness of his state; he *felt* it, he *rejoiced* in it, he walked in the light of his God! But how short was this happiness! He disobeyed; the Spirit of God fled from this now polluted place, and it is easy to conceive the darkness, yea, the blackness of darkness that now overshadowed and filled his once holy soul! His mortal enemy took possession of the citadel of his heart, in which his heavenly Master had once swayed his sceptre, and out of the magazine of

hell stored it with all those diabolical passions and brutish appetites which rage there—ever raging, ever ungratified! Nicodemus, &c. * * * * *

When God, therefore, spake to man, by his own Son, it was in parables: “Without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world:” and the apostles, in preaching, generally followed our Lord’s manner as well as matter. St. Paul’s mind was of such a cast that he seizes on every object, and improves every circumstance in the Jewish ritual to explain the doctrines of the Gospel: this epistle abounds with instances illustrative of this fact. But in his travels also he seizes every occurrence of interest, the customs and practises of those Gentile nations among whom he preached, to fasten these doctrines the more firmly in their minds. From one of these customs is the allegory of our text deduced; and it will be impossible for us to understand its true meaning without taking into account the subject which he pointed at.

You know that St. Paul had been at Corinth, at which place he founded a church of considerable magnitude; and here he resided some time, and twice or thrice visited it afterward. Near this city were celebrated certain games called the *Isthmian* games, so called from the isthmus upon which they were celebrated, and on which Corinth was situated. The exercises practised at these games were of various kinds, as wrestling, boxing, running, chariotteering, throwing the discus, &c., &c.; and as the nature of these exhibitions was well known to the people composing that church, he abounds in his epistles to them with figures in allusion thereto. For example:

“So *run* that ye may obtain.” Here is an allusion to the game of running in the race to obtain the prize. Writing to the Ephesians, he says, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”—an allusion to the game of

wrestling. Writing to Timothy, he says, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;" alluding to boxing; and he calls this the *good* fight. "I have finished my course;" alluding again to running; he had just finished the race and got to the goal. "Henceforth," says he, "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," in allusion to the crown which the victor received, which crown was only composed of some vegetable, as parsley, or the leaves of some tree, as laurel or otherwise. To this Paul opposes the words "crown of *righteousness*;" and as he elsewhere says to the church at Corinth, "a crown which *fadeth not away*," which fading away was the property of all such crowns as those with which the victors in these contests were honoured; the morning's bloom was soon followed by the evening's shade. "Which crown shall be given me by the *Lord, the righteous Judge*;" alluding to the judge appointed to award the prize in these games, who could perhaps be biased in favour of a certain competitor more than another; but the Lord is the *righteous Judge*, who will do right; he is no respecter of persons.

Peter has just the same figure in his mind when he says, "When Christ, who is the chief Shepherd, shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory which *fadeth not away*." Nor is our blessed Lord himself without allusion to the same when he says, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate:" literally, *agonize*; the persons who contended at the games were called *agonistæ*, *agonizers*, and the games themselves were called *agonæ*, that is, *agonies*; so the evangelist, speaking of the struggles of our Lord in the Garden, says, "He was in an *agony*," such was his conflict with the weight of his sufferings.

The particular agony to which St. Paul alludes in our text is that of running—the agony of running; for they were all called *agonies*. In this agony four things are to be considered, namely:

1. The herald went forth to proclaim aloud that the race was then about to begin, to declare what the nature of the race was, the terms thereof, and also to make known the

necessary directions to the agonizers. He was called by a word which properly means a *preacher* or *publisher*, &c.

2. Connected with this was the leader of the course; this was some eminent citizen, who was esteemed fully competent to be the arbiter of the contest. His duty was to mark the ground on which they were to run by a white chalked line; for this purpose having to go over the ground before them, he was called the *leader* of the race; he then took his station at the goal whither he had arrived, and when the contest was over he awarded the crown to the lawful victor, placing it on his head; in this point of view he was called the *crowner*, so that he was both the *leader* and the *crowner* of the race.

3. Next in these games were the persons who were appointed to run the course; upon their entering the lists they were stripped of their former garments, and had a dress given them suitable to their undertaking. The foot was put upon the line that had been chalked out, and they were commanded to run, but upon certain rules, the breach of which would deprive them of the honour they sought; they must run *lawfully*. It is with this figure in his mind that the apostle writes to Timothy, "If one strive for the mastery, yet is he not crowned unless he strive lawfully."

4. The last particular was the immense and innumerable crowd of spectators assembled to witness the exhibition. The whole surrounding country was so literally covered with them that they might be compared to a cloud overshadowing the land: they were witnesses of the game and of the conduct of the agonizers; they saw how each ran, and were anxious in the highest degree for their success or defeat, according as they were actuated by contending motives. Each of them had his friends, it is true, who, by their hearty cheers and encouragements, revived the spirits of the champions; yet each had his enemies, who wished his defeat, rejoicing at his fall, and using all their arts to baffle his zeal and diligence.

Now these four particulars formed the Grecian games, and we shall consider them in the same order, that we may illustrate this passage of the word of God, and see it in its

true beauty. We shall attempt, in all humility and in the fear of God, to spiritualize as we proceed, and to render the whole useful to your souls. Brethren, pray for us, that we may speak boldly as we ought to speak.

I. The herald. This is not set forth in our text; though the apostle mentions the other three particulars, he makes no mention of this. But the reason was obvious; he himself was the herald or preacher, and was making the proclamation which the duty of that office required, in the very words of our text. These words were his message, and this message is fulfilled in proclaiming them.

Now, *you* have heard the heralds of God proclaiming to you, every day in the week, that the game is now in progress; *I* again proclaim *this is the accepted time*; the race is marked out for you, the Judge has taken his station at the right hand of his Father, and has admitted you upon the course; the groups of witnesses are now collected, and there is no time to be lost. *The game!* did I say? Shall I use so light a phrase as the *game of eternal life*? If it offend you I would change it, and call upon you by the love due to your own souls, by the tender mercies of God, by the awful judgments of God, make sure work for eternal life! There is no alternative, the race is for eternal life; if you refuse to run it, *eternal death* is the inevitable consequence. Oh! how awful will be the punishment of the disobedient under the Gospel dispensation! If, under Moses's inferior dispensation, every transgression received its just punishment, how much more dreadful will their condition be who sin under the Gospel, inasmuch as its blessings are secured to us on so much better promises, and convey to us so many better privileges? It is all *mercy now*, but it will be all *justice then*, for "our God is a consuming fire." This leads us then to inquire,

II. With whom have we to do? Who is our Judge, then, and arbiter? It is he who is called *Jesus*, the name that charms the ears of the believer; but the name, at the bare mention of which the sinner will shrink at the day of judgment, and, to escape the sound, seek the lowest pit of hell. *Jesus the Saviour!* the very meaning of the name! and the

Saviour obliged then to become the *executioner* ! The very name will then appal the stoutest heart, as it brings to his remembrance the end for which that Jesus died ! Jesus has undertaken to be the *leader* of the race, for he it was who brought life and immortality fully to light by the Gospel. The apostle in this same epistle calls him our *forerunner* ; he ran before us and took his station, and called on us to come up to the mark to which he has arrived ; and what is this ? Even the summit of the Throne of God himself. He has sat down with his Father on *his* throne, and believers are called to participate in the same felicity. Then it is that, having presented them as the travail of his soul, he becomes the *crowner* of their faith, and makes them *kings* as well as *priests* unto himself. In this sense the words of our text should properly be understood ; we read them Jesus Christ, the *author* and *finisher* of our faith ; it is a very bad rendering, and properly should be the *leader and crowner*. And what is the race to which we are called ? It is the race to heaven, to God ; for this we were primarily created and designed by God—O love Divine !—that we might be eternally happy in the enjoyment of himself. But we forfeited all right and title thereto ; and such was the love of God, that he sent as a Redeemer one who *redeemed* for us the forfeited inheritance, and calls on us now to come to himself. He has marked out the road before us, he has pressed down the briars and thorns which strew the way, and requires us to walk in his footsteps, to place our feet in the same track. “ Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” If I were preaching for a year I could not say more than is contained in this short sentence. If we possess the same mind we shall attain the same end ; the end laid down in our text, and before hinted at ; we shall sit down at the right hand of the throne ! The nearer we walk to the pattern of Jesus the more secure will be our way ; as the natural sun leaves an illumined track behind him which is visible after himself has disappeared, so Jesus, the *Sun* of heaven, having illumined our earth a few thirty years, took his rapid flight to the regions of glory, the mansions of eternal day ; but yet he has left the refulgence be-

hind him, that whoso keepeth his word shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life !

Though the path in which we must walk is well expressed by the apostle in the words I have quoted above, " Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," yet this is *general* ; but in our text he descends to *particulars*, and enjoins us to copy after Jesus in that part of the course where he *endured* the cross and *despised the shame*. Now, though this part of our Lord's life is principally insisted on here on account of the peculiar circumstances under which he wrote this epistle, yet it is no less applicable to us. The Hebrews had daily to take up their cross ; they were cast out of their quiet habitations, nor could they obtain any redress to their aggravated grievances. The apostle therefore beautifully points out the Redeemer in this character ; he endured the cross, despising the shame. But, says the apostle in this same chapter, " Ye have not resisted unto blood !" Though you have lost all, you have not been called upon to lay down your lives ; but Jesus marked the way by his own blood. It was not a chalked line He marked for our way to heaven ; but His precious blood stained the way and marked the ground. In the garden this agony begins, the peculiar object of his mission ; every inch of the ground from there to the cross is stained with blood : " His sweat fell to the ground in great drops of blood !" Led to Pilate's hall, the scourge lays open his back, and causes his precious blood to flow from thence to the Pretorium ; there the crown of thorns again continues the stream, till he bears his cross and sinks beneath the weight to Calvary's summit, and there the residue is now poured out. Sinner ! this was done for thee ! Thou art the man that nailed him there !

And what sustained Jesus under all this ? the joy of fulfilling his Father's will ! Do you suffer here ? It is your heavenly Father's will : fulfil it ; but, besides, your eternal salvation depends upon it ; the salvation of your own souls is the reward ; so that, however severe your trials here, God makes them work out for you " a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Oh ! the words *work out for*

you—he presses all into his service. We must be *cross-bearers*; and though our afflictions, in consequence of our Christian profession, are not so severe as those of the Hebrews—and thank God for it—yet we have all a daily conflict; we must daily crucify the old man with his affections and lusts, and put to death the body of sin! It is hard work when old Adam within us begins to die, and yet we must destroy him before we are fully renewed in the spirit of our minds. Now this must be the practice of all believers in Christ Jesus; which leads us,

III. To inquire who are called to run the race, and what must be their qualifications and conduct. All men are called; Jesus has invited all; he has led the way for all, and all may be partakers of the same reward; in this race *all* may be conquerors! “Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man.”

Now what are the requisites for our running well? We must “*lay aside every weight.*” You know no one, in a race, would load himself with any weight, nor bear any which he could dispense with; everything of this kind would hinder his progress. So it is with the Christian. What your peculiar weight or hinderance is I know not; perhaps something *lawful*, for weights are different from sins: “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life;” your child, your wife, your husband, may be the weight. Do you feel that you are loitering in the heavenly way, and not making that advancement which you ought to do, and which you perhaps wish? Pray to God to show you the hinderance, and determine, by his grace, to put it away.

Closely united with this direction is the next: “*and the sin which doth so easily beset us.*” The apostle alludes to the long flowing garments worn in those days, which would very much incommode a person in haste, and so completely fold around his feet that it was impossible to run in them. They must lay this aside if they wished to run so as to obtain. Now there is attached to every man some such sin as this, called the *besetting sin*, the *well-circumstanced sin*; the sin that surrounds us as a garment, which meets us on all oc-

casions, going out and coming in, and in every situation of life. This may arise in some from the peculiar nature of the constitution, habits, or education; and of all other sins, it is the most difficult to subdue. It is common to us all; and if each of us do not know the sin that doth most easily beset us, we betray great want of self-knowledge and little acquaintance with our own hearts!

It is to the soul what the heart is to the body. As the heart first begins to beat in man, and gives life and strength to the whole frame, and is the last part of man which ceases to move and exist, so with this sin; it is the first sin which begins to discover itself in us, gives life and vigour to the whole, and last of all expires; and as the body of flesh becomes dead when the heart stops, so the body of sin is crucified and dead when, by the grace of God, we are enabled to destroy it. The well-circumstanced sin to which the Hebrews were most exposed was the fear of persecution; they suffered so many hardships that they began to waver in their profession of Christianity, and this led them to turn away from it.

This may not be the besetting sin of any of you; that sin may not arise from anything outward; it may be an inward preventive, and most probably is so. Now this will hinder you; you must lay this aside, together with every weight, and run with patience the race set before you.

You must *run*, not be dragging on in the heavenly journey, continually complaining, "My leanness, my leanness, wo unto me," but increasing more and more, day by day, in the knowledge of God. Oh! how far should we have been on our journey had we been more diligent! more faithful! But come, take courage; forgetting what is behind, press on!

"*Looking unto Jesus.*" This is what is before. Now the runner kept the goal and judge in view; he had a single eye; he was dead to every surrounding scene, and all his soul was in his eyes! So we must constantly keep this pattern, this copy in our view, and imitate it, if we would run well.

And we must run *with patience*. The word is very ex-

pressive ; it is taken from the figure of a person bearing a burden : he meets with resistance ; his load increases ; yet he lays his shoulder under it and bears it. Now just so it is with the Christian ; he must bear with many a thing in his way to heaven—many a cross and affliction ; but come, take up your cross and bear it ; bear under it, and run with patience till glory crown your perseverance. And this leads us to consider,

IV. The immense number of witnesses we have as spectators of our patient conduct. The first great witness is Jesus ! the faithful and true witness ! His eye is ever on your endeavours ! But whom did Paul particularly mean ?

If I could withdraw the dimming veil which prevents us from viewing the immense numbers of those ministering spirits who are about the heirs of salvation ! what a scene would rush upon your astonished view ! Could I but draw the veil of mortality from each of your eyes, and show you the world of spirits, direct you to their anxious solicitude, that you should run steadily in the way, and show you how they rejoice when you press on to attain the blissful station ; and point out to you the immense number of those pious souls with whom you took sweet counsel upon earth, who long to renew the correspondence, and who, for this purpose, are about your path, going out and coming in, and about your beds at lying down and rising up, methinks you would begin to double your diligence in such a manner as you never yet have done !

Could I show the husband a wife, the parent a child ; could I but show you our venerable fathers in the Gospel, and point my finger to a Wesley, a Fletcher, a Coke, a Whitfield, and unfold their most ardent desires for your perseverance ; and could you but hear the rejoicings of those blessed saints when you run well, and the encouragement which such a state would afford, it would constrain you to “lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset you,” and be “followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises :”

“ Angels now are hovering round us,
Unperceived they mix the throng.”

But, on the other hand, could you but look out of yourselves and see the attention of the world directed towards you; how many of those whom you least suspect are watching your private and public walk, and perhaps looking up to you as patterns to copy after, and who reproach that name whereby we are called when you slip on your journey, methinks every latent spring would be strung to increase your care and alacrity to walk as becometh the children of God. (“Golden Ball.”—)

But must I stop here? nay, I must not. Could I draw aside the sable curtain and show you the millions of wicked spirits who are about your path, lying in wait for your overthrow; how all the machinations of hell are at work to seduce you to sin, you would shake off the sloth and arise from the dust. “Satan, as a roaring lion, is now going about seeking whom he may devour.”

Shall all heaven, all hell, be concerned about you, and are not you concerned about yourselves? Shall heaven weep at your indolence and hell grin applause at your indifference? while angels weep, shall devils laugh and make you their sport? May God stir you up! may you start afresh now; put your foot anew to the work, and run for your lives to our spiritual Zoar! It is a serious subject; all is serious about you: be you therefore serious. * *

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SERMON VII.

SPECIAL SALVATION.

1 Timothy, iv., 10.—We trust in the living God, who is the saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

THE chapter begins with, “Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith.” Of all departures, none affect the vitals of religion more than the two opposite and extreme doctrines holding the ascendency in the minds of men. Some believe in a *partial* salvation, and others in a *universal* one, in an unscriptural

tural sense. In neither of these extremes does the truth lie; our text takes hold of both, and brings them to a true bearing.

- I. The *general* salvation in which all men are interested.
- II. The nature of that trust in God which interests us in a *special* salvation.
- III. What is that special salvation?

I. Without wearying ourselves with subtilities in answer to the question, how is God the Saviour of all men? ask a plain man, one who comes under that class to whom the Gospel is preached, and would not he say, it means that God has afforded to all men some common mean of salvation; that he alike designs the good of all, and that, in pursuance of that design, he has done all that was consistent with his perfections, without infringing on the accountability of man.

1. He has set forth the same Saviour, Jesus Christ, as the procuring cause of the salvation of all men. All who are saved, even infants and heathens, neither of whom know the name to which they are indebted for it, are saved by him. Thus Jesus did by his death bear away the sin of the world; he redeemed all from the curse of the law, bought them from under the old covenant, and purchased a new covenant on better terms, which he offers to all. Thus he tasted death for every man; the thunders of Sinai have ceased, and we have been brought under a dispensation of power and grace. Quote the Holy Ghost as authority—"He tasted death for every man."

2. The salvation by Christ is not less extensive than the operating cause which God has communicated to all. As he gave his Son to die *for* every man, so he has imparted the gifts of the Holy Spirit *to* every man, whereof the Holy Ghost is also a witness. "Christ is the true light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." He elsewhere calls it the grace of God, and says it has appeared un'o *all* men. And that none may say this is common grace and unable to save, he says it is grace which "*bringeth salvation.*" It is saving grace, and will lead to salvation.

(Nor is it more inconsistent to suppose that any for whom Christ died may perish, than any who have been partakers of the Holy Ghost:—yet this last is a fact admitted by all. The Holy Spirit is of equal dignity with the Son, and it is no detraction from him if this be the case with many.)

3. The outward means, whereby we receive farther supplies of grace, are given to all men. Not only is there an inward light, but an outward revelation. * * * “*The Gospel of the grace of God.*” * * * Precious Bible! To us this has appeared, and we are without excuse. The *Gospel ministry*, the grand instrument in the salvation of men to whom this Gospel has appeared. * * * *Gospel ordinances*, wherein we are led from the outer to the inner place. These outward means are given to those who have received the Gospel.

But the heathen world likewise, though they have not the Gospel or *these* outward means, are not thereby deprived of all means: “The heavens declare the glory of God;” his eternal power and Godhead may be understood from the things which are made; and those among them who fear God and work righteousness will be accepted; but those who do not are left without excuse: every mouth is stopped.

God is the Saviour of all men; what could he have done more? Christ has been given for all! The power to embrace him and his salvation is given to all! outward means are afforded to increase the power, with an abiding promise, “To him that improves, more shall be given.”

Why, then, are not all saved? Our Lord shall answer you: “Ye will not come to me that ye might have life. How often would I, but thou wouldst not.” Hear the words which St. Peter was inspired to speak: “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.” Ye choose death in the error of your life.

II. The nature of that trust in God which interests us in a *special* salvation. This includes a deep conviction of my need of salvation. Until this is felt, and *painfully* felt in me, I never can apprehend the mercy of God.

Farther, a forsaking and loathing of sin.

Again, a renunciation even of righteousness. Many are

out of the pale of salvation by righteousness [self-righteousness] as much as sin.

“Or sin or righteousness remove.”

All this precedes the faith that justifies.

I then believe, 1. That Christ is *able*. 2. *Willing*. I doubt no more. Finally, a personal apprehension of his merits to my individual case. *I am saved, now saved*. Lord, I believe.

III. The effects are,

1. *Peace*, the guilt all taken away; joy follows.

2. *Power over sin*.

3. *The witness of the Spirit*.

4. *Deliverance from the fear of man—of death—of hell*.

No fear.

But oh! the *eternal* salvation! * * *

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SERMON VIII.

THE RIGHTEOUS AND THEIR REWARD.

Psalm lviii., 11.—Verily there is a reward for the righteous.

BEHOLD a Xerxes weeping over his army: similar to this, witness an incident in the life of Jesus; he wept over Jerusalem, but carried his views much farther than the Persian monarch, even to their immortal state. Xerxes wept from disappointed ambition, Jesus, from compassion! Xerxes' lamentations regarded himself, Jesus' those whom he came to save. Xerxes wept like a haughty conqueror, Jesus like the Saviour of men!

What *has*, then, become of all *the souls* which have passed off the stage since Xerxes' time? One generation has followed another! but where are their *spirits*? Have they sunk into non-existence? has death put out the vital spark? or only opened a passage for the spirits escape? Where will the swarm finally settle? where these souls find a resting-place? We *feel* that immortality is the lot of man, and *rea-*

son decides with us here. All nations have a glimmering hope of a hereafter.

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast,
 Man never is, but always to be bless'd.
 The soul, uneasy and confined from home,
 Rests and expatiates in a world to come !
 Lo the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
 Sees God in clouds or hears him in the wind ;
 His soul-proud science never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk or milky way ;
 Yet simple nature to his hope has given
 Behind the cloud-topp'd hill a humbler heaven.”

But when civilization came did not the light of science remove this hope ? Nay, it acquired new strength. Revelation concurs with our reason here ; and on this point infidelity, in spite of herself, is one with revelation, resolving the question in favour of an existence after death.

Now if the soul exist, it must be in a state of *consciousness* ; no other idea of its existence can be entertained ; it must be in happiness or misery. On what, then, will these depend ? Refer we this to the omnipotence of God ? Will he distribute happiness and misery irrespective of human actions ? But we cannot *separate* his attributes, and with one, another wound. His power is inseparable from justice, holiness, truth, and goodness. Paul is authority here. “God is not mocked : for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” “If we live after the flesh we shall die, but if we, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live.” This, then, is the seedtime—eternity the harvest ; and the text coincides with these reasonings.

I. Inquire into our personal character—if *righteous*.

Righteousness applies sometimes to Deity, again to other orders of beings, but chiefly to *man*. But Scripture says, “There is none righteous ;” yet again, “The Lord loveth the righteous.” Do these oppose each other ? We must explain the term.

Righteousness is applied to God ; not that this is any rule

of right *foreign* to himself. * * * Again, it is applied to his laws. * * * *

But, in reference to man, it may refer either to his internal nature or to his external actions. When to the first, we find a parallel with the mind of God, as far as a finite mind can resemble the infinite. When to the second, outward conformity to inward congeniality of nature, abstinence from all evil.

But we must view it in reference to man in two lights, a legal and an evangelical righteousness. The *first* is a purity of nature that never deviated from the rule of right; its claims are not on merey, but justice; it is a stranger to repentance, for it has no transgression to lament or forsake; it places no dependance on the mediatorial righteousness of Christ.

This is the character of that individual who is legally righteous. But where does he live? Not on earth; once such a character existed in Adam; also in the second Adam, but in no others. Hence it is said there are "*none righteous, no, not one;*" and if no way of restoration had been provided, no man could be saved.

But an evangelical righteousness presupposes man's guilt; it appeals to *mercy*; merey is the foundation of its claim; its essence arises from the pardon of sin through the merey of God, revealed to the soul by Jesus Christ. To such the promise of reward is made.

None being legally righteous, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus accepted it.—"Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour," and sent the heralds of salvation to all, inviting them to come to him through Jesus Christ. The first qualification is, that we feel our need of righteousness, and our cry must be, "God be merciful." * * * *

* * * "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." The moment we see our misery we have all the qualifications God requires for an interest in Jesus and the moment we can relinquish all trust in

everything else, even in our repentance, God receives us, speaks peace, &c., &c.

The pardon of sin, then, is the foundation of evangelical righteousness, and new powers are implanted in the soul to bring forth fruits of righteousness and holy obedience. Growing in grace to the end, we are denominated righteous and entitled to the promise of reward.

II. The reward.

But here human language fails ; the Scriptures are highly figurative on this point, yet fall far below the reality.

Perhaps there are in us, in embryo, powers hardly suspected and quite unknown. If so, the ploughman may yet rise above a Newton : the infant may furnish an illustration. But this we know, our powers will be suited to the realities ; but what the glory, the happiness will be—alas ! conception fails.

The darkness of Providence will then be done away, and a great share of our happiness will be in reading over the old volume of Providence from the beginning of the world. *Here* we are under severe afflictions, *there* we may see, that if such and such a cross and sickness had not met us we had been ruined ; and we shall see why God weighed us down with afflictions till the storm of danger blew over.

But we shall then more clearly contemplate the greatness of redeeming love in Jesus ! casting our crowns before him !

Again, the human mind is capable of *endless progression*. What more pleasing than to stand on the margin of the ocean of infinite truths, and draw therefrom forever ! What new truths also may we learn from other spirits !

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However, our business here is to acquire moral goodness and spiritual holiness. God has provided the means. If *fitted* for glory we shall inherit the reward.

But, if otherwise, all these scenes will be reversed, and all the powers of the mind become so many inlets through which to pour calamity on the spirit ; calamity of which we have no more conception than of the reward of the righteous. Where, then, is the use of mere intellectual powers (Voltaire), unsanctified learning ? If intellectual powers

are not made subservient to a preparation for heaven, how dreadful! (Wesley's opinion of the philosophers.)

Blessed are ye poor! Come, still say, "God be merciful." If *righteous* your character, the reward is sure; the rest *remaineth for the people of God.* * * *

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SERMON IX.

THE PRESENT OBSCURITY AND FUTURE GLORY OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

A FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

Matthew, xiii, 43.—Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

THE hand of death has touched us sore; the cry of death has been heard in your chambers. *We* too feel the hand of death upon us; the sentence is in ourselves: yet all feel a principle within that is proof against the stroke; it only opens the door to liberate that immortal principle. True, many may shrink when the door opens—linger—nay, be forced to depart; but, by the grace of God, the inhabitant within may long for its opening.

See the importance of human life, the only basis of human usefulness; for there is no work in the grave whither we are hastening. Oh! redeem the time; work while it is day. Our friend has been early removed, but he was found in the midst of his usefulness, doing the will of God. Reminded, then, are we, not of the brevity only, but the *importance* of life. Eternity takes its complexion from time—it is as we make it. Our departed friend is now reaping what he sowed.

The text and context lead, by a parable, to the connexion of time and eternity. It is thus explained by Jesus himself: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man: the field is the world: the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one: the

enemy that sowed them is the devil: the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

In drawing some farther improvement from our subject let us consider,

- I. The present obscurity of the righteous.
- II. Their future manifestation.

I. The present obscurity.

Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father; implying that they are now waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. God knows that eternity is long enough to shine in; at present, therefore, he allows us to remain in comparative obscurity.

I need not dwell on the *character*, the "*righteous*;" you are often informed of it. Do ye not know that the righteous, and they *only*, shall inherit the kingdom of God? Yes, you *do* know, by our ministry, that, unless washed and sanctified, you cannot be saved. Oh! that you *felt* as much as you *know*. The righteous! There are many such here to-night.

The causes of the present obscurity are many.

1. The character of the world in which they live. They are not at home here, but strangers and foreigners—born of heaven. The character is so glorious that the world has not the power to discern and estimate it. Hence Christians are disregarded; though they are the salt of the earth, the leaven which preserves the world, yet the world knows it not, and despises them. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him." A Christian is an enigma to a man of the world.

(Southey undertaking to write the life of Wesley.) Hence they burn them. They are under a cloud now : not always so !—(Blind man and colours.)

2. The station they generally occupy in the world. If all were men of eminence, the world might be struck. If kings had dipped their sceptres in righteousness, and the nobles * * * But where are we to look ? “Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.” See Jesus standing like himself with the *healed* around him and the *dead* rising, while he exclaims, “The poor have the Gospel preached to them.” It is their peculiar heritage ; it is laid at the foot of the throne as well as the threshold of the cottage, but the poor form the largest portion of the church : so they remain under a cloud, known only to their poor neighbours. They shine, but in corners, not on eminences. Look into our congregations. The poor hear us gladly. The poor encircle the Lord’s table ! the poor rejoice. “I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.” Poverty, then, incrusts the diamond, and the lapidary has not yet cleared it. Learning would not shine with the poor ; they follow him who drew his breath in a stable.

3. The infirmities to which they are subject ; for example, of the mind. They cannot make their experience charming to a fine ear, yet they may have the anointing of the Holy Ghost. “Once I was blind, now I see :” more than the infidels can say. Obscurity will be the consequence. Also *bodily* infirmities.—Lazarus.—Many precious saints send out their fragrance in the desert, &c.

4. The humility with which they are clothed. Modesty may become criminal ; yet perhaps not *real* modesty. But it is one thing to be drawn out of a corner by the praise or driven out by the fear of man. They mind neither ; but, like Jesus, their voice is not heard in the streets ; they are “clothed with humility.” Do not, then, *strive* to shine ; this is not the shining place. *Angels, in their visits to earth,* always appear in the form of men—*Satan* as an angel of light. So with the children of both.

II. The future manifestation of the righteous.

The text announces their glory. When? "Then shall the Son of man send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity;" then shall he clear the church. Then also, in the morning of the resurrection, shall the righteous shine forth; yea, then shall they shine in their *full* glory, whatever other glory they may have previously.

Three things to be remarked here.

1. The place of their manifestation—"in the kingdom of their Father." We are not here dazzled with description; Jesus has softened it: the kingdom of our Father—Father waiting to take us home. While looking down, even now, he says, "This is my beloved Son, and I will spare him as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." What language! His *jewels* as well as his *children*. True, this, in comparison with the former, is a coarse metaphor, but this we do not mind. He is now polishing! we are in the crucible to be fitted for the Crucified's crown. At the last day he *makes up* his jewels, not *gathers* them, but sets them in his crown—he will deck it. The last mile is travelled over happily when home is in prospect. Stephen—going home under a shower of stones—beheld the Son of God *standing* to receive him. Courage! Endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ Jesus. (Our ship tossed—but

"There all the ship's company meet,
Who sailed with the Saviour beneath."

Yea, they shall enter under full sail—not like a shipwreck. May the entrance be abundant, swelling on the tide.)

We are *soldiers* now, and are to keep our armour bright, and be always ready for the conflict: but then we shall unbuckle and put on the fine robe, renouncing the sword for the palm and the helmet for the crown of glory. Then let death come! Dr. Rowland Taylor at Hadley, in Suffolk, a martyr of blessed memory, exclaimed, "Never better, soon at home! only two stiles more to ascend, and then I shall reach my Father's house;" he saw it through the smoke of the fire! "I have," said Bede, "done my work, and am going home, and such a home!" "The best of all is," said

Benson, "I shall find my Father in his kingdom." Saints are now separated. * * * We warm towards Hottentots, &c., when converted; we long to see them. "The whole family in heaven and earth are our brethren." Many are escaping. (Allude to the deceased.) *Who* feels not that heaven has a portion of each of our families? No gulf exists between heaven and earth—it is between heaven and *hell*; they cannot come to us, but we can go to them. There shall be Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God; all the glory and wisdom of all ages, and the *Lamb*. They also shall be *kings*:

"How can it be, my heavenly king,
That thou shouldst us to glory bring,
Make slaves the partners of thy throne,
Decked with a never-fading crown?"

2. *Its splendour*. Mark the figure—sun bursting from the clouds. The righteous do not now diminish its splendour abstractedly. Though not so perfect as in heaven, yet all the elements exist. See the clouds breaking at the bed of the dying saint. He does not sink like the sun into the ocean; the rays penetrate the clouds like morning breaking upon the heavens; they are tinged with glory while he is seen struggling through like the sun. Then I retire—the brightness dazzles me; the veil drops, but the sun has risen into the heavenly galaxy!

Every veil shall then be removed; the world *shall* then know both him and them. John, who had often seen him as the man of sorrows, once saw him as you shall then behold him: "His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength." *Then* the world shall be *there*, and *shall* know them. Nero and Domitian *shall* meet with those whose blood they shed. But I will not go to the pillows of infamy; yet all shall be *there!* then they shall see them on the *right* hand owned by Jesus! There shall be a pub-

lic manifestation. I know which place I would rather have, the cruel tyrant's or that of the saint tortured by him. Then shall we discern between the righteous and the wicked; no matter how splendid sinners are here, rich and poor shall be alike *there*. Now the Neros "call on rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb." But the saints will mount above the fire with bodies like Christ's; no infirmity, or tear, or sigh shall pollute heaven's atmosphere: no note of sorrow to disturb the celestial harmony!

3. The perpetuity of their manifestation; it shall be "as the sun:" the very emblem of perpetuity—not diminished by age, but the same now as when it lighted Adam and Noah—not in the least shorn of its beams.

Yet, unlike the sun, the redeemed spirit shall enlarge, lengthen his beams, and travel the path of eternity with increase of splendour forever. It rises above the figure: the sun shall be put out—never so the sons of glory. Jehovah shall be the glory in the midst of them forever and ever.

Application.—Why should any of you set in darkness! The loss of a soul! Will it be my soul? Tell me, my God! Or that man's? God forbid! Why should they die when thou hast died? * * * *

—Memoir of the deceased— * * * *

SERMON X.

THE PROUD ABASED AND THE HUMBLE EXALTED.

ADDRESSED TO CHILDREN.

1 Peter, v., 5.—God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.

ONE of the greatest evils in the world is pride, and one of the greatest blessings humility; the blessing is the cure of the evil. I treat it simply for you, children. Pride and Humility.

I. The *folly* of pride.

1. Are we proud of our strength? It is far inferior to that of many beasts. Our feebleness is so great and infirmities so many that horses and mules must carry us.

2. Our clothing? It is not so pretty as the peacock's. (Fable of the Jackdaw in others' feathers.) Other animals are always alike; we metamorphose, clothing wears out, and is our shame. What is deficient in the head they make up at the heels; or what is wanting inside they put out.

3. Our beauty? It is inferior to many flowers. When most florid and gay, three fits of the ague change into yellowness, leanness, hollowness, and wrinkles. After all it becomes food for worms! But so have I seen a rose. * * * (Taylor, p. 10.)

4. Our riches? That man is a fool who prides himself upon these; for, if exalted above his neighbour because he has more gold, how much inferior is he to a gold-mine! He is below a chain of pearls or a knot of diamonds.

5. Our birth? He who plumes himself upon this is proud of the blessings of others, not his own. He ought to thank God and be humbled. It is generally true that he has in himself less virtue and honour than those who raised his family, and has degenerated. Cicero's expression. * *

If thou hast more than thy neighbour, thou art more indebted to God, and wilt have to account for principal and interest: foolish to boast of being more in debt.

Pride was not made for man; it is his fool's coat. A proud man is like a puff-ball—wind!

II. The *wickedness* of pride.

1. Makes a man especially hateful to God. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate."* "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord."† According to our text, pride arms God against us; and according to others it turns him from us. It is of all things the most unlike God! though he is the "high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy." Jesus Christ humbled himself; angels are servants of his that do his

* Prov., viii., 13.

† Prov., xvi., 5

pleasure. All creation was made to be dependant; the proud man breaks the link: the highest title of man is servant of God, and your servants for Jesus' sake.

2. Pride is the most diabolical sin with which we are acquainted: "Being lifted up with pride, we fall into the condemnation of the devil."

3. It is the most productive of *all* sins! Most of the crimes in the world may be traced to pride. It is the parent of *covetousness*: "Yea, also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people."* Of *persecution*: "The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor:"† of *strife*: "Only by pride cometh contention."‡

It was the sin of Absalom, Haman, Herod, and the Pharisees. Yea, it was pride that instigated the death of Jesus.

III. The *destructiveness* of pride.

Seeing it is the participant of such crimes, no wonder it is the most destructive sin—a presage to the ruin of those in whom it reigns. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." It is the forerunner of shame: "When pride cometh then cometh shame, but with the lowly is wisdom."§ Haughty Pharaoh and his host were overthrown by pride. It was Haman's downfall as well as his sin. It brought Nebuchadnezzar from his throne to herd with beasts, and caused Herod to be eaten of worms. God has determined "it shall be abased." A proud man cannot receive the grace of God. "How can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from above?" Therefore, in the world to come the proud go to their father the devil; and what room for pride there? Thus God resists them here, and puts them from him hereafter: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Secondly, we notice the cure of pride—Humility.

1. Be convinced of its great excellency; it is directly opposite to pride: "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace

* Habak., ii., 5.

† Psalm x., 2

‡ Prov., xiii., 10.

§ Prov., xi., 2.

to the humble." We are to be clothed with it. It ranks as a grace of superior eminence in Christianity. Jesus places it first among the beatitudes: "Who is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?" "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." It is the humble that "*shall be exalted.*" Humility never was taught by the philosophers. Well then did Jesus say, "*Learn of me*, for I am meek and lowly in heart." While pride turned Lucifer into hell, humility exalted Jesus to the right hand of the Father.

2. Store your mind with knowledge. Ignorance and impudence are twin-brothers: "He is proud knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings."* Become acquainted with your own sinfulness and the holiness of God. "When I survey thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast created, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him."† To obtain knowledge read the Holy Scriptures, attend the ministry of God's word, pray, seek counsel of pious Christians: you will sink lower accordingly. God will give you grace, and afterward give you glory.

3. Its effects. Consists not in railing against yourself. Thou likest not others to speak ill of thee. Sayest thou, "I am a fool?" May I say it of thee? If it be thy opinion, all men wish others to think as they do; if not, thou art a hypocrite. He who calls himself intemperate, foolish, &c., and is angry when his neighbour calls him so, is false and proud.

It consists more in *feeling* than saying: it is a sense of *grace*—the fulness of God in the soul. A noble mind is distressed at the attentions of his superior: so here. Such a person is ashamed of sin only. Ashamed of doing a dishonourable thing, will not stoop to sin! Humility is the first, second, and third Christian grace.

Improvement.—1. Never be ashamed of birth, parents, trade, or poverty. The humble man will speak of them

* 1 Tim., vi., 4.

† Psalm viii., 3, 4.

when any occasion offers *requiring it*. Primislaus, king of Bohemia, kept his country shoes. Agathocles, king of Sicily, by the furniture of his table confessed he had been a potter.

2. Let others be praised in thy presence ; object nothing : his disparagement increases not thy worth. Be content that he is employed and thou art rejected, he preferred and thou fixed in a low employment. With some, one fly is enough to spoil a whole box of ointment.

3. Nay, exalt thy brother, if truth and God's glory need it ; the Christian standard is not sufficiently held up : " In honour preferring one another." " Esteem the other brethren more than thyself." Cyrus played only with those more skilful than himself, lest he should shame them by his victory, that he might learn something of them, and do them civilities.

Do not suppose that I want you to be indifferent to a good name ; no ; I would that all might speak well of you. But secure it by living virtuously and humbly. Be content to be loved and prized by God alone. Let your good name be nursed abroad, and never brought home to look upon. Let others use it ; let them speak of it if they please, but not thou at all except as an instrument to God's glory and thy neighbour's advantage. Like Moses's face, shine to others, but make no looking-glass to thyself.

SERMON XI.

SERVICE FOR GOD ALWAYS REWARDED.

PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF COMMENCING THE ERECTION OF A
NEW CHAPEL IN DUBLIN.

Ezekiel, xxix., 17-20.—And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came unto me saying :

Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus; every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled; yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it :

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army.

I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God.

“SURELY the Lord doeth nothing but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets. When he would bring in the flood upon the ungodly, he divulged the secret to Noah. From Abraham he would not hide the thing he was about to do in the destruction of the cities of the plain. When by his judgments he resolves to punish the house of Eli, he lodges the heavy tidings with Samuel. To Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel he announces the doom of surrounding nations.” What a friendship have God’s children with him!

I. Consider the circumstances which led to this prophecy.

II. The instruction which it is intended we should draw from it.

I. The circumstances which led to this prophecy.

We might carry up the origin of this prophecy higher than the time of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah; but this is sufficient for the present purpose. That unhappy monarch ascended the throne of Judah by the mere suffrage of Nebuchadnezzar, whose vassal he had become, and that at a

time when the sorrows of his house were before his eyes, and with a consciousness that the Lord had brought them upon him because "Jehoiakim did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done." Notwithstanding, "Zedekiah did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to *all* that Jehoiakim had done." He had now filled up the measure of his fathers. There is a time in national wickedness as well as individual, when the cup of iniquity overflows and the guilty are given up to the sword. God having withdrawn his protection from the Jewish nation, it became an easy prey to Nebuchadnezzar. Having cast off the fear of the Lord and confined his prophet Jeremiah, Zedekiah made a treaty with Pharaoh-Hophra, king of Egypt, engaging his aid in breaking off the Babylonian yoke, though he had sworn a solemn allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar. The consequence is known: Nebuchadnezzar sends his army, Jerusalem is destroyed, the Temple is burned with fire, and the royal family slain except Zedekiah, whose eyes were put out.

The proud and haughty inhabitants of Tyre exulted in the overthrow of the Jews (see chap. xxviii., 24). God will not suffer his judgments to cause exultation in others, but rather fear and trembling.—"Has God cut off the Jews and grafted thee in? Be not *high minded*, but *fear*."

The prophet therefore denounced their doom, for their pride reached to heaven (see chap. xxvi., and xxviii., 2). Nebuchadnezzar, eager for conquest, proceeded against Tyre; thirteen years he besieged it, and when at length it yielded to his power he found only the bare walls of a deserted city. The inhabitants had removed, with all their wealth, to that part of their town which stood on an adjacent island.

Having failed in his expectations, Egypt is promised him; Egypt had offered her power to Zedekiah, and forsook him in the moment of his greatest need; and God now gave it to Nebuchadnezzar, thus punishing both the perfidious Egyptians and the rebellious Israelites, and at the same time rewarding the Babylonians. Thus was the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar overruled and made to praise God: *he* had no

design of glorifying God therein, but God caused him so to do. Having briefly noticed the circumstances which led to the prophecy contained in our text, we notice,

II. The lesson of instruction which we are to draw from it.

1. This passage affords us a striking view of, and insight into, some of the mysterious acts of God's Providence. We find an effect depending upon its cause, which effect in itself becomes a second cause, and produces other results depending on it; and all suspended from the throne of God. Often do we see him skirting his throne with darkness and concealing his ways from man; acting altogether independently of the creature's wisdom, and refusing to admit him into his council-chamber or answer his question, "What doest thou?"

"We cannot always account for the acts of his Providence; and because we see not as God sees, we naturally feel inclined to insult the Deity with our advice or encumber him with our help; and when both the instructions and assistance of man are rejected, when the Almighty pours ineffable contempt on his little plans and cobweb fortresses, the disappointed creature begins to think that the pillars of the universe are shaken, that heaven and earth are to participate in that wretchedness which he has procured to himself, and perish in sympathy with his ruined hopes and expectations."

Doubtless the revolutions of which we have been speaking were covered by the veil of futurity from those who were immediately concerned therein; but time having drawn that veil aside, we, upon whom the ends of the world are come, can clearly read this subject in the volume of God's providential dealings; and therein discover him riding upon the whirlwind, holding the winds in his fist, and saying to the waves, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

It is thus that we perceive the glory of his power as the moral Governor of the universe; and while we gaze with wonder, we adore! We behold how he can maintain his throne in the midst of the commotions of the universe; that no earthquake, throe, or agony in the terrestrial world can shake the foundations of its pillars or remove it from its

steadfastness; and as the Governor of the world, we are struck with the harmony of all his actions and the power whereby he extracts the good from every ill!

If the sins of nations or individuals were always immediately followed with the punishment they merit, this world would not be a state of probation; obedience would not be voluntary, but forced; we should walk, not by faith, but by sight; we should not honour God by our confidence in his perfections and in the dispensations of his Providence. He would not be a God hiding himself, nor would his judgments be a great deep; nay, the whole nature and design of religion would be subverted; man would have no room for trust in God; he could have no reason to rely upon him in the dark and gloomy day, nor in any state of darkness to stay upon his God. If his wrath instantly crushed, he would be the destroyer rather than the governor of the world. To destroy is easy, and discovers little perfection; it is the perfection of a tyrant. But the wisdom of God appears in making even the wrath of man to praise, and engaging that the remainder of that wrath he will restrain. This, then, is the plan upon which he acts in the government of the world, and hence he is called a *wise* Governor.

Whatever, then, may be the gloom which overspreads us as a nation; whatever may be the raging of infuriated men who would make the people the panders of their purposes and the instrument to forward their selfish designs; whatever may be the cloud which hangs over the domestic circle—should it be caused by a depression in circumstances without any pleasing future prospect, at the same time that you can behold an ungodly neighbour who uses not half your industry, and yet seems to prosper in all he takes in hand; or should it be caused by something nearer your skin, nay, by very bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh; should there be a lost Joseph or a rebellious Absalom, an unfortunate Dinah, or a Simeon wanting—whatever may be the gloom which at times appears to cover the ark of God among you, and for a while to obscure its glory, yet remember there is a God, who is over all, blessed forever; he inspects all your affairs, he hears all your petitions whenever you make

known your requests unto him, and his voice is heard in every storm—"What thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter." Refer all events to his Providence; follow his openings; where he appoints you, go; be led by his finger; commit your cause to him in well doing; trust in the Lord and do good; and though he may plant his footsteps in the sea and ride upon the storm, yet

"Soon thou shalt, wond'ring, own his way
How wise, how good his hand!"

2. Behold an instance of the goodness and severity of God! Long did he spare that rebellious nation, the Jews, often did he warn them, sending his prophets morning and evening, rising up early, and late taking rest, to call them to a sense of their duty towards him. But they steeled their hearts against conviction, and would none of his advice; sometimes he thundered judgments; but their hearts, totally empty and free from righteousness, echoed them back to the heedless gale; sometimes he allured, but they had no ear for the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. At last he complains of them, they were like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke; he fed them at his own stall; he gave them his easy yoke of duties, which ought to have been delightful, coming from so kind a hand; but alas! they would not draw in it by gentle treatment; he *goaded* them by corrections; they kicked against the pricks, and ran back upon his chastisements; they were like a backsliding heifer! But behold the severity of God! The cup of their iniquity was full; Manasseh had greatly contributed to it; he had expressed a great quantity of the roots of bitterness into their portion, and his successors after him, with the exception of Josiah, added to it; till Zedekiah completed the measure and drew down on them wrath to the very uttermost.

And is it so that, in the affairs of nations as of individuals, a period may arrive when God shall be provoked to give them to drink of the cup of his indignation, and that to the very dregs? Yes; national wickedness has its measure as well as individual crimes. With regard to ourselves, long have we, as a nation, known the loving kindness of the Lord. Behold his goodness to thee, oh happy, happy Is-

rael! who is like unto thee? the prophets of the Lord have risen early and late taken rest, seeking for the health of the daughters of thy people! you have no famine of the word of life; it is brought into your very houses, and you are instructed around the social hearth in the lessons of redeeming love! Would to God you had made proficiency according to your privileges! Because we have not, sometimes the rod has been applied to us as a nation, but oh! how slight have been its corrections! how gentle did the hand of love apply it! in judgment he remembered mercy; he kept not his anger forever. One year he smote us with the pestilence, another by a scarcity of bread, and yet the people have not returned unto the Lord: now he lays aside the chastisements and fills our storehouses with the overflowings of his Providence; all nature teems with life; he has provided food in abundance for man and beast.

“Oh! may thy love constrain and force us to thy breast!”

Yet, in the midst of all this glory of the Divine goodness, a gloom has settled upon a part of our horizon; yet, has our God forsaken us? Has he delivered us up to the madness of the people? No; Britain is not forsaken of her God; but, as in nature the greatest gloom immediately precedes the bursting of the gates of light to usher in the morning's dawn; as in grace the darkest moment of the dismal night in which the returning sinner struggles to get free immediately precedes the rising of the sun of Righteousness upon his heart, so I trust it will be in these our lands. If ever England was alive to the cause of God, it is now; if ever Ireland laid that cause to heart, this is the time. All sects and parties seem to have agreed to join heart and hand in the grand work of conducting the ark of God through the land of our inheritance. That reserve, that want of openness of soul, that suspicion of each other's welfare, which long caused them to raise walls and fortifications around each other's commonwealth, is now removed; and now all the thousands of Israel have agreed with one consent to come out of their place and to sound the Gospel trumpet. The blessed effects are seen by every eye; at its sound all party

walls have tumbled down, and, as fellow-Christians, they rejoice to find themselves placed in a goodly land, flowing with milk and honey. The voice of Him whose Spirit has produced the mighty co-operation in Bible Institutions and Missionary Societies is heard to say, "Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your seed forever. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto you."

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings o'er your head."

God never did forsake a land or nation so long as such mighty designs were in preparation for evangelizing the world! True, many in these lands do fill up the measure of their iniquity, and you may ask, why, then, are they not taken out of the way? I answer, mankind are so variously and intimately blended together that it is scarcely possible to strike an individual only, without affecting others. Now the Judge will not punish indiscriminately; he will not destroy the righteous with the wicked; he would rather spare a thousand enemies than injure one friend. He would have spared Sodom if but ten righteous had been found therein; and when this was impossible, the angel could not destroy that city until Lot went out. God knows that plucking up the tares would injure the wheat, and this he will not do. This is the security of Britain. She possesses men who could fearlessly stand and conquer in the field, yet she has a stronger force, who occupy the camp at home; holy, faithful men, who stand before the Lord, and have power to prevail with him for her prosperity; and a wise senate is fully satisfied, as was our beloved monarch, that in proportion to the piety of the nation would be the stability of the realm. The prayers of the faithful have been heard; their prayers are heard; their prayers will yet be heard! Her shores are not rendered defensible merely by her towering cliffs, which vie in colour with the drifting snow, but the glory of the

Lord cast around her is her defence ! And will God forsake us at such a juncture, when from our lands the word of God is sounding forth and the ends of the earth are hearing the joyful sound !

“ Oh ! may it sound from shore to shore
Till sun shall rise and set no more ! ”

God grant that the time may speedily arrive when it may be said,

“ The dwellers in the vale and on the rocks
Shout to each other ; and the mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy ;
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round ! ”

3. But the principal instruction to be derived from this text, and to which I would particularly direct your attention, is, *that service of any kind done for God never goes unrewarded*. None can be losers by anything they do for him : in one way or other he will surely recompense them. Even services done for him by worldly men obtain a temporal reward : “ The Egyptian females, though strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, yet feared the Lord, and therefore ‘ God dealt well with them and built them houses.’ ” See Jehu’s case.* Also the case in the text. This indeed is a poor recompense ; it may appear splendid in the eye of the vain and sensual, but the righteous are far from envying it ; they dread to be excluded from future recompense by the sentence, “ They *have* their reward.” They are more afraid of their destiny than of the malice of the wicked, and therefore pray, “ Arise, O Lord, deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword : from men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure : they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness : I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” Egypt was all the remuneration of Nebuchadnezzar, and what could it do for him ? What is it to him now ? But the righteous are had in everlasting remem-

* 2 Kings, ix., 7-10, and x., 16, 29, and 30.

brance ; their reward is not confined to this life, though *here* they generally reap according to that they sow ; but this is not all : “ I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, from henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord ; even so saith the Spirit ; for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” *Yea, saith the Spirit*, they rest from their labours, and their works are yet to follow them. They will draw in their train eternal consequences, and God will render to every one according to his works.

When I speak of service done for God I would not be supposed to say that the utmost of the powers of any *creature* could render any true and proper service to the *Creator*. He is independent of the creature ; the cause can never be dependant on its effect ; he could act both in the natural and moral world without human agency ; and doubtless he would have done so had it been as agreeable to his wisdom as it was easy to his power. In the case before us he could have sent an angel, as he did to the Assyrians, to destroy them. But where would be the reward of the faithful steward ? In the *moral* world the power which he manifested on the day of Pentecost might be again exerted. But what room, then, for the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope ? It is in making the one subservient to the other that he has strengthened the bands which unite society together, and accepts services of his creatures as if done for himself.

We are sometimes afraid of touching on these subjects, lest we should seem to incline to the doctrine of a salvation by works ; and some of our hearers are occasionally offended if works are mentioned at all : none, however, will come under this character but such as profess Christ in words, but in works deny him ; such as cry, Lord, Lord ! but know nothing of going about doing good. Show me thy faith without thy works, and Saint James shall tell thee it is no more than the faith which devils possess ; it produces no fruit. But the Christian gives evidence of the genuine character of his faith by his works : “ I will show thee my faith by my works ; ” and though good works are not the merito-

rious condition of our title to eternal life, yet they are the twin graces of genuine faith, and, according to their number and kind, will be the gift of eternal glory; for it is by works that we give evidence of the strength of that principle from which they were produced, the love of God shed abroad in the heart, or Christ dwelling there by faith. Where this exists they will follow as necessarily as an effect its cause; and if God have blessed us with ability, we shall abound—overflow in every good word and work.

Would to God the natural selfishness of many professing Christians were overcome! How few are the number of our Dorcases, those who not only relieve, but *go* and relieve; seek out the haunts of wretchedness, the charnel-houses of death, soften the pillow of the dying saint, and administer to Christ through his afflicted members. Did Christians consider more that this is the very rule of judgment on which God will try the world, they would *practise* as well as profess. How can they expect to hear it said, “I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me?” Oh! if a blush could tinge the immortal countenance, would it not be excited by the recollection, of how seldom did we perform such acts; and if pain could possess their glorified nature, would it not be produced by the wish, “Oh! that I had loved Him more and served Him better!”

But, brethren, we hope better things of you, though we thus speak; and things which pertain to salvation. We trust that your obedient hearts are ever waiting for opportunities of doing good, and that your cry continually is, “Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?” “Make known thy will, and as thou hast freely given me, I will feely render back to thee. Only honour me by making use of me, either my time, talents, substance, health, strength, life, nay, death itself; suffer me to be thy slave, and to lay all at the feet of that Saviour who laid his very life at my feet that I might rise exalted by his fall and find in him my all in all!”

You are aware that, at the conclusion of this service, as

many of our friends as can, are requested to retire into the lobby of the house, for the purpose of making final arrangements for the building of a house for God in Lower Abbey-street. God has put it into your hearts to build him a house, and he has conferred an honour upon you which your children after you would covet to have been favoured with; he will make you his artificers, and thereby put upon you your double honour.

My heart bounds at the thought that many will meet *

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SERMON XII.

PURE RELIGION.

PREACHED IN BEHALF OF THE ORPHAN ASYLUM IN DUBLIN.

James, i., 27.—Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

IN the days of St. James as well as in our own time, many were the pretenders to religion and virtue; many who were not doers of the word, but hearers only, deceiving their own souls. They could not, however, deceive him with whom they had to do, before whose eyes all things are naked and open; dissected in all their parts, whose very *word* is sharper than any two-edged sword, dividing asunder soul and spirit:

* * * * * To

such professors St. James hesitates not to declare, that all such religion is vain; vain as it regards the creature, who is the subject of it, or the Creator, who is its professed object, and utterly incompatible with the pure religion of the Lord Jesus, required by God and the Father.

The particular tenet which they appear to have held was this: they pleaded for the necessity of faith in the merit of the atonement made by the Lord Jesus as the only way of our justification, but denied the necessity of those works which are the proper evidences of it, concluding that, as *his*

work of redemption was a *perfect act*, and made for the individual case of man, a belief in the sufficiency of that atonement is all that God will require: satisfying themselves that they stood perfect in him by a mistaken application of the terms, they folded their arms in apathy and sung,

“ Before the throne our surety stands,
Our names are written on his hands.”

This system is yet held in honour by thousands of mankind, although its dogmas have been so completely exploded by the apostle; but others there are who, to avoid this track, strike off in quite another direction. Such enforce the necessity of good works as the *meritorious* condition upon which eternal life is suspended, and the only requisite, or, at least, the pre-eminent one, for its enjoyment; for if they do not reject the belief of the merits of the atonement of the Lord Jesus out of their scheme, yet it is brought in merely as an appendage to the former, and thrown altogether in the back ground; or if, in some, it assume the *first* place, yet their faith appears a principle of so weak and debilitated a nature that it has rather the appearance of a *human* than of a Divine and Almighty origin: it is not a faith which makes all things of God and purifies the heart; good works are therefore the title upon which they look for the enjoyment of God, conceiving that, where these are possessed, this will be a countervailing balance for any other deficiencies; nay, leave even a surplusage on the Book of Life.

Now both these classes come under the character of those whom St. James calls “seeming to be religious,” for they have both a semblance of religion; they have both copied after the likeness of the heavenly maid in the attitude of profile, each looking at different sides of her person; but neither of them bear her true image, for the symmetry of the whole figure is not discoverable in either position; the one has produced her portrait as in the act of laying hold on the Deity with the one hand, and the other, looking at the other side, has displayed her as scattering abroad to man; but as she never lets her left hand know what her right hand doeth, so it is impossible to form a proper judgment of the beauty of her whole person but in a full front likeness; then we

behold her in the act of faith attached to the Deity on the one hand, and scattering the heavenly seed on the other, enriched and enriching; though poor in herself, for she is but a receiver, yet making many rich.

I. Consider St. James's definition of pure religion.

II. Consider the case of the objects to which he directs our attention.

III. The claims they have on us, and our duty with regard to them.

I. Consider St. James's definition of pure religion.

And here we are naturally led to look at its genuine effects: 1. Upon the *heart*: and, 2. In the *life*.

1. Upon the heart — “Keep himself unspotted from the world.” Very much is implied in the expression, and must be presupposed by us; the apostle is describing *pure* religion, and speaking of a heart where “graces reign and love inspires the breast.” But this state was attained by gradual progression; this *spiritual* creation had its beginning like the *natural* one; the soul was a chaos, or, rather, a stagnation of impurity; the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; that Spirit which is only known by his effects, and which, in the first stage of the new creation, passes over the soul like the wind that goeth whither it listeth; you hear the sound, you feel its effects, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth: God has spoken it, “Let the new creation be,” and all things begin to rise good and fair!

This is the first state of a justified believer; the soul is now opened to receive the spring of living water which is to throw off the waters of impurity and to cleanse the heart; it rises at first by slow degrees, but the recipient is a worker together with God, believing and receiving all the aid of the power of God working in him mightily; exulting in new powers, he feels the Spirit of God now as a *sanctifier*; he knows him not now in his transient operations, first moving upon his soul as the inspiration of God, but as the influence of God; not breathing upon, but flowing in and through his heart. The communion

of this nether spring being kept up with the upper fountain, as he receives the full truth in the love thereof, he is made fully free, and “out of his belly flow rivers of living water :” now his experience is, that the blood of Jesus Christ momentarily cleanses him from sin ; and Christ dwells in that heart by faith. He has now his fruit unto holiness, for his conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God. This is a mystery which the wise men of this world know not ; it is spiritually discerned ; for this mystery of faith is only kept up in a pure conscience, in one who is full fraught with Christ in a pure believing heart ; and though many an obstacle or mound may be raised up by the world or the devil, to divert the course of the tide of Divine feeling, yet, as it partakes of the nature of the upper fountain, it bears down all before it : and it will also find its way back to that Deity from whence it issued, and be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. But this final absorption into the Deity can only be the reward of one who “keeps himself unspotted from the world.” Though he may know God as a Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, yet he needs a continual influence of the grace of Christ *to keep him in this state* ; no attainment, however elevated, can be preserved merely because it was attained, and hence St. Paul harmonizes with St. James, and gives this advice to Timothy, “keep thyself pure ;” informing him of some who, because they lost *purity of conscience*, made shipwreck of that faith, which can be preserved under the skill of no other pilot. To this purport St. Peter mentions a possible case : that one who had once clean escaped the corruptions of the world, through lust might be again entangled therein. Perhaps the great cause which might induce to this, is a ceasing to press after more and more of the spiritual communion with God to which we are called ; a satisfying ourselves with present attainments, not anxious to seek after more of that spiritual food, by which alone the inner man can grow with all the increase of God—in the knowledge and love of God our Saviour !

We to them that are at ease in Zion ! The garment is become spotted and unlike those which are washed and made

white in the blood of the Lamb! This spiritual halting allows time for the world to steal a march upon us—then we begin to keep pace with it instead of keeping it in the rear, until by and by we feel that the love of the world has found its entrance into our hearts and the love of the Father is beginning to die away!—"Keep yourselves unspotted from the world!" Remember the bridegroom to whom you are espoused, keep yourselves chaste and holy!

2. Consider the effects of this religion in the *life*. Shall such a one hide this righteousness in his heart? Shall such a tree bear fruit to itself? No! impossible! St. James shows us in this chapter the process of the growth of this plant of God in the heart of a believer. Having cleared the ground and lopped off every superfluity of naughtiness, and thus proved himself *sincere* in the sight of God, he receives with meekness the ingrafted word, the scion of life, present and eternal.

Having now received the seed of the kingdom of God, which is able to save his soul, it begins to be operative in his *life* as well as in his *heart*; his happy soul feeling its freedom and possessing the principle of all true obedience, he is now a *doer* of the word and not a *hearer* only, and the seed is now discoverable in the green blade. Continuing in this growth by taking good heed to the grace bestowed, looking into the perfect law of liberty and continuing therein, willing to be taught of God, ever praying for light, "What I know not, teach thou me," the green ear becomes visible, and he is now pronounced blessed in his deeds; he is blessed or happy in his employ, even *here*; and he sees an eternity of happiness awaiting him hereafter.

But wherein consists this green ear? It is in his *works*, as St. James says, not in his *words* merely; hereby he giveth evidence that his faith is alive and vigorous; and as every tree is known by its fruit, so hereby he knows that he loves God because he keeps his commandments; the heavenly seed of pure religion has sprung up in his heart, and its fruit ripens to maturity, while he "visits the fatherless and widows in their affliction." Thus it increases until its branches are borne down with fruit; the plant which produced them

is then removed to the upper Eden, and the fruit gathered into the heavenly garner. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth ; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours :” the *Spirit* attests the blessedness

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Thus we see what true religion is, and the fruit it produces. 1. That it is free from sin and purifies the heart, while it reigns and keeps the possessors of it unspotted from the world, thus suited in every respect to the purity of God, introducing its subject, by meekness and poverty of spirit, into the kingdom of grace *here*, and by purity of heart into the kingdom of glory *hereafter*. “Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” “Blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God.”

2. The man who possesses this religion will show it, so far as he has ability and opportunity, in visiting the fatherless and the widows, not in a mere formal and fruitless manner, but relieving them in their distress and giving them continued protection. Piety in the heart appears in the life ; “loving him that begat,” he will love those who were made in his image ; and thus will works give evidence of the genuine character of the faith within. Thus true faith is found to be the magnetic needle which unites him to God ; it is a faith working by love, which will ever produce good works, even to whatever bearing its point may be directed, in its trivial variations, caused by the various climes in which we have imbibed our different opinions ; yet its deviations will not be very material ; for if it have been truly touched by the great Magnet from on high, it will naturally tend to the bright and morning star, and attract within its influence all the opportunities of doing good which come into contact with it. But this power was not in itself ; it was the effect of the application from above which gave it this direction to the Deity and this power to be beneficial to men. Thus all merit is found to centre in God, and all boasting is excluded ; God receives all the honour, and yet bestows on man a full reward : “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and goodness of God,” &c., &c., &c.

II. Consider the case of the objects to which St. James directs our attention.

The *fatherless* and the *widow*. In such a character as that I have described, all works of mercy will display themselves, everything which can assimilate to God: he will become eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, nay, life to the dead; the father of the poor, the friend of the friendless, the defender of the oppressed.

But St. James only particularizes two of the objects of his regard, and confines the evidences of pure religion to the alleviation of these two cases, for in these must the sufferings of every other state be included: cases painfully afflicting, blending in themselves every minor evil, and eclipsing, as with the darkness of death, every other shade of wo—the fatherless, the widow: cases which, although so painfully afflicting, are too apt to be disregarded, because no clamorous wailing is heard in our streets, and in order to find out the unhappy sufferers it is necessary to visit this recess of misery, this receptacle of sorrow, this charnel-house of death—to visit the fatherless and the widow.

Alas! the time has rolled by when the orphan was not fatherless, when the widow was not bereaved; contrast for a moment the awful change! How pleasant the domestic scene of a family perfect and entire; what happiness centres in that dwelling; what heartfelt delight beams from the windows of the soul! “See the traveller! How joyfully does he hail the hour of his return when he shall occupy the vacant spot in his domestic circle. Behold the man of science! Closing the volume of his deep research, he smooths his wrinkled brow, and in the cheerful, happy scene of his domestic bliss he forgets that he is the philosopher, and thinks himself the child! Take the man of trade! How cheerfully does he support the weariness of his calling throughout the livelong day, by the grateful thought that by and by the season of intercourse—sweet season—will arrive. Yonder comes the labourer! He has borne the burden and heat of the day; the descending sun has released him from his toil; he is hastening home to enjoy repose. Half way down yonder lane, by the side of which stands a cottage, his children run to meet him; one he carries and one he leads. The companion of his humble life is ready to fur-

nish him with his plain repast. See! his toilworn countenance assumes an air of cheerfulness; his hardships are forgotten, fatigue vanishes; he eats and is satisfied. The evening is fair; he walks with uncovered head around his garden; enters again and retires to rest; and the rest of the labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much. Inhabitant of this lonely dwelling! who can be indifferent to thy comfort! Peace be to this house!"

How have their joys faded away! How has the sweet fountain been made bitter! *She* had a *husband*, but he was taken from her by the hand of death! They had a father! but he is not! *Her* head is as waters, *their* eyes as a fountain of tears; they weep day and night! Absorbed in sorrow, they neglect the wants of nature; but she is urgent in her demands, and must be satisfied. These natural wants again harrow up the remembrance of their loss; and it is now found that the family is left without any means of support. Surrounding neighbours are touched with their awful state, and utter their thoughts and wishes in accents of grief. They pity the disconsolate mother, and ask, "What will become of your fatherless children? How will they be supported and trained up for useful life?"

But we must divide these partners in sorrow, and confine ourselves to the case of the most distressing; the one first named in the communion of sorrow, the fatherless! the greatest sufferers! The widow's breach may be repaired; though the crown fell from her head, it may be replaced, and she regain what she had lost; but the fatherless! an irreparable loss! Father—a name which was once sweeter to the child than the siren's song—is blotted out of his vocabulary, and can be named no more! O Death! thou hast done thy worst; thou hast made them poor indeed!

Behold, then, these orphans! these impoverished ones; poor innocents! poor through involuntary consent, not through their own crime! victims! not agents! In the case of the adult poor, many may be the alleviations of their sufferings; mature age is fruitful in invention and importunate in its demands for relief; but the orphan has none to help

him ! the glory of his head is fallen, and the child is thrown into the shade, unnoticed and unknown !

Behold these orphans ! their distresses how complicated ! Here you may find all the variations of helpless orphanacy ! Some bereaved of a father's smile, some of a mother's love ! and some deprived of both ! they will never more enjoy a parent's warm embrace ; these are bereaved indeed ! I can, with the pencil of my mind, draw the scene of a pious couple struggling against the tide of poverty, night and day tugging at the oar ; but they have little ones to whom they look for future joy which alleviates their present suffering I can remove this scene, and substitute another, in which I behold the head of a family removed by an awful and inscrutable Providence. He has left behind him a wife ; he has also left a daughter, now a little orphan ! The mother finds mercy in the dispensation ; her grief, otherwise inconsolable, is dried up ; the innocent chides the mother's tears, while her throbbing heart conceals her own, and pours the balm into that part particularly affected. The mother lives—lives in her child ; the child lives, but it is only for her mother ! But I again take up my pencil, and reverse the scene : the mother is removed and the father is spared ! Of all objects under heaven, a motherless daughter, in the morning of life, is the most pitiable ! Pining anguish enters her little soul ! The father, seldom at home, is diverted in some degree from his grief while pursuing his daily duty, and the strength of mature reason has fortified his mind : meantime the infant mind wastes itself away ! It walks the seat of all its past comforts—stares with seeming wildness on the withered scene. A thousand little arrangements made by the mother's hand combine to keep the wound still fresh, while she gazes on them with mournful pleasure : her mother's image is ever present before her, for her business was domestic, and she sees her in the armed chair, and rises and treads the domestic rounds : the sigh heaves, the tear gushes out, the streams flow, and mother ! mother ! involuntarily escapes her lips, for it is uppermost in her heart ! The father seldom views the scene ; she carefully conceals her grief, attends him in her mother's stead, reads his wishes in his eye, antici-

pates his wants ; but, though steadfastly she reads his looks, she cannot trace the soft lineaments of a *mother's face* or find a *mother's smile* ! But the father is removed, and now weigh the affliction ! Surrounded by a gloom which will not suffer hope to shed a ray, she is but one remove from the *shadow of death* ! Death had eclipsed in eternal night her only joy ere the shade of the intervening monster had been dispelled from her abode. Saw you such a scene, and would no messenger of peace step in to this dreary haunt, and at least ameliorate, if they cannot restore, by quieting the distress on account of future support ? Would none be found to whisper to the throbbing heart, "*Peace, be still !*" This tale is not fiction : I have shown you the picture ; there are the living images !

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III. The claims they have on us, and our duty with regard to them.

1. *As Christians.* If religion be that which is to induce a conformity to its Author, who, though rich in all the glories of the upper skies, yet for our sakes became poor, and ever went about doing good, can it possess that heart in which no bowels of mercies are excited at the orphan's artless tale, but whose soul ever presents the insensibility and frigid temperature of the dead, though cased in a living coffin ?

If religion be in the heart, let its fruit appear ; the Lord puts you to the test. Though he no longer keeps his court upon earth, but has removed it to the heavenly city, yet he sends down a message by his ministers ; and this is the message which we declare unto you, that pure religion is evidenced by this display : will you then parley with the ambassador and slight the embassy of the high court of Heaven ?

St. John, enlarging on this message, asks, "How dwells the love of God in such a man ?" with what face can he call himself a Christian ! Who is the man that has just risen from his knees while he has been saying, "Thou hast dealt bountifully with thy servant," and yet contracts immediately the spirit of avarice, and lets go the Divine feeling ? I speak

to you as unto *Christians*; no fruit in the life is a proof that there is no religion in the heart, and all professions of this kind only prove the man to be a religious hypocrite. Good works are not meritorious, for all merit must centre in God; but yet they are rewardable when flowing from evangelical principle. They justify our faith, and shall meet a full reward; while others who produced them not will share another fate. "Conceive a thousand shivering beings on the cold flood of death; driven by its strong tide, they soon reach the opposite shore; they are driven away in their wickedness. I follow them with my mind's eye to a cavern hideous on all sides, roused as one great furnace flamed; and through volumes of sulphur and smoke I am just enabled to read in characters of blood, 'Reserved in everlasting chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day;' my soul sickens at the sight, and I turn from the scene; I anticipate what that judgment will be: "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: for inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the *least* of these ye did it not to me;" therefore, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

I speak to you as unto Christians, "Be ye followers of God as dear children." Behold the peculiar regard which he has ever taken for the fatherless. It was among the laws delivered by God to Moses that the gleanings of the field, the wheat, the grape, and the olive, should all be left to the orphan and the widow; nay, the Jew was even obliged to distribute part of his tithe to these forlorn ones, and it is expressly said that they are not to make merry or rejoice without the fatherless. It is observable, also, that in the conditions which God made by the prophets in his covenants with the Jews, almost the first was, "If ye shall judge the fatherless." On the other hand, whenever their crimes were multiplied and he recapitulates the catalogue, among them we find this charge repeatedly made: "Ye judge not the fatherless." That men might ever be kept in mind of this duty,

God has applied to himself the epithet of *Everlasting Father*; and Christ annexes the same to our dispensation when we daily pray "*Our Father* who art in heaven."

Shall, then, the peculiar object of the regard of Heaven not be the object upon which we shall look with more than common feelings? shall not our awe be inspired while looking at these children of Deity?

But learn a lesson from these children of Providence. "Divine Providence is always deserving our attention. Providence is God in motion; Providence is God teaching by facts; Providence is God fulfilling, explaining, and enforcing his own words; Providence is God rendering natural events subservient to spiritual purposes; rousing our attention when we are careless, reminding us of our obligations when we are ungrateful, recalling us to our duty; Providence will be heard, and whoso is wise will observe these things." Read you not in these orphans the presage of what may be the case with regard to those who now call *you* father? who now call *you* mother? "Yes, O man! O woman! you must separate! It is useless to keep back the mortifying truth; it was the condition upon which your union was formed. O man, it was a mortal finger upon which you placed the ring, vain emblem of perpetuity! O woman, it was a dying hand that imposed it! After so many mutual and growing attachments, you must separate" and leave your little ones to be then called orphans: one must be taken and the other left, fondly to deck your grave or bedew the spot with nature's tears. Trust not the love of friendship with your helpless charge! Many have been the false friends which these orphans found; many were their professions; "but how small the number of sterling ones in the day of trial! Some of those who are now fawning on you would not, if a change of circumstances occurred, even know you or yours; they leave the garden in winter; there is nothing to gather. The flower which you placed in their bosom, as soon as it has exhaled its perfume, they throw withered into the dust. Of what use is the scaffolding when the building is finished? It is laid out of sight: 'My brethren have dealt deceitfully.' * * * Trust not then in

riches; they may perish before your child should enjoy them; the moth may eat these." Lay up treasure for them more durable this night, and make God your friend while you act up to his golden rule.

2. As *men!* I appeal to humanity. Behold these orphans! and, if you can, steel your heart against them and bind it with fetters of brass! But no; you could not do it! you could not but be affected with their cries: "Cast upon the world, we have no father's care, no mother's love!" A rhetoric is heard in such cries powerful to soften the hearts of the obdurate and to persuade the opulent to contribute to their relief; and *that* man would cease to be human who could not be moved by them: their case is sufficient to melt the adamant heart to tenderness, and to act as a powerful attraction to draw relief from the coffers of those to whom God has given ability to bestow. Surely, as men, you could not leave them alone to mourn their suffering lot and rehearse their tale of wo! to speak to the passing wind and sigh to the unheeding gale!

But it is often found that professing Christians are prevented from the diffusion of universal charity by that worst of monsters, sectarian bigotry. (See Styles.) But I speak to you as unto men; we may differ about nonessential points of doctrine, and it is no great wonder; we know little of God or the ways of God, and no wonder that we should entertain diversified opinions on subjects connected with such a Being. But we do know what we ourselves are; and as we all expect to meet in heaven, can we not agree to meet somewhere on earth? Shall no spot be found as a common possession on which we can take our stand? Yes! there is at least one: let us then rally around suffering humanity; here we can all meet. Look at these orphans; let not these be the victims of party feeling; forget that we are separatists, and feel that we are men! Should the demon of party feeling attempt to cross the boundaries of this line, he should at once be hewn in sunder!

Ye poorest of the poor! Little was it thought by your fond parents that you would ever be exposed to the cravings of public charity; often did the fond mother give lati-

tude to the warmth of her imagination, and with that prolific pencil delineate a thousand pleasant and delightful scenes with which she hoped her future life would be diversified ; but the rainbow vanished, and the blackness of darkness overspread the arch of heaven !

Pardon me, my brethren, if I detain you so long : I dare not stop ; I am afraid to cease ; the interests of this charity lie near my heart, and I shall never forgive myself if I omit aught which could further its interests ! A year's support is now depending, and many are knocking at the doors of this institution for admittance, and shall we shut them out ?

Behold these orphans ! were I advocating from this place the cause of a Magdalene asylum, and expatiating on the horrors of the state from which its inmates had been rescued ; and had I the flattering eloquence of Tertullus, or the powerful appeal of a Paul calling on you to preserve the streams of living water in this Bethesda—this porch of mercy !—methinks you would listen with feelings of peculiar sympathy ; nay, you would think me tedious until the moment arrived when you would have the opportunity of contributing : and what a contribution would you not bestow to relieve this case of mercy !

And do I address an audience whose compassion can only be excited by the view of wretchedness and crime ? Is it because the lovely innocents for whom I plead have not yet mingled with the impure throng that you will not contribute as liberally to their *preservation* as to their *rescue* ? Is it because their breath is not yet tainted with the odours of impurity that you will refuse the prayer of their lips entreating you to preserve them in their youth ? and is it because I do not bring before you a victim fresh and bleeding on the charger of crime that I cannot excite your commiseration ? Is it because no reeking blood sprinkles my petition that it is thrown aside as unworthy of your regard ? Where, then, is the milk of human kindness ! Where is the mind that can take no delight in the buddings of virtue, and can only be induced to prop up the faded flower !

But I recollect myself. Will not the fragrance of innocence supplicating for relief be sufficient with a Dublin

audience? Yes! I know whom I am addressing; and I *have* confidence in *you* in all things.

Finally, then, behold these orphans! these tender plants doomed to spring up beneath your shade; God has blessed you with the means, and shall the dew lie all night on your branch, and will you not shake it off to relieve the violet beneath! See these tender plants, not more abhorrent to the touch of crime than the sensitive plant to the touch of man: they shrink from its very approach! Clothed this night with their own pure vestment, I am the more happy in exhibiting it the longer: I fancy myself on their behalf in the character of a cherub from on high, pleading the cause of those whose angels do continually behold the face of their heavenly Father. If I have appeared clamorous, it was the voice of these tongues crying "mercy, mercy! preserve our bodies and save our souls!"

But I will check myself; I transfer them to you. Oh! that I could cling them round your garments and fasten them there for a few moments; how would they clasp their benefactors' knees, and with a heavenly smile implore blessings on your heads! I know there is a feeling excited; I have caught the fervour from you; I did not inspire it; the pulpit has caught the electric fluid; I know I have your hearts; I see, I feel you are with me! I *was* afraid!—pardon me for suspecting you—that the interference of another charity of a similar nature at this very hour would damp the fervours of the orphans' friend; but now all fear has vanished. It shall never be said that Dublin could not receive two appeals to public benevolence at the same moment of time without impoverishing each other's supplies. No! I have confidence in you in all things; and much as I regret the unpleasant conjunction of a neighbouring congregation of respectable citizens on this subject, yet I entertain no fear with regard to you, but am satisfied you will prove that my confidence was not misplaced.

Follow, then, the impulse of your minds; suffer not your design to be smothered in the birth; give as you feel purposed, and believe me, the sentiment with which I concluded my appeal to you as Christians applies to you equally as to

me: "Do unto *these* as you would wish they should do unto you."

I again repeat it, I have your hearts! But shall I therefore abuse your trust? No! Father of the fatherless, I transfer them to thyself; the hearts of all this congregation are in thy hands; let thy Spirit perform the essential part of this pleading, and incline this people to join hands with thee in making these orphans live! Thou hast promised, and we believe thy word: "The Lord will provide!"

SERMON XIII.

CHRISTIAN COURTESY.

1 Peter, iii., 8.—Be courteous.

THE apostles are not only careful to lay the *foundation*, but to *build* up. * * * * *

Hence the difference between the *commencement* and the *close* of their epistles. How comprehensive this whole verse, "Cherish fervent charity," and discover it in acts of *pity* or *courtesy*, according to circumstances.

And what is *pity*? The sympathizing aspect *love* wears towards the needy and miserable. Love exerting herself in kind and liberal services; love pouring her oil and wine into the wounds of some poor sufferer whom Providence has thrown in her way; love giving utterance to her feelings in tears of compassion, in words of consolation, or in prayers and intercessions. It is love weeping with them that weep.

And what is *courtesy* but another form of *love*? It is the varied aspect which she wears when, having quitted the house of mourning in order to attend to the claims of social intercourse, or to transact with mankind the ordinary concerns of life, she wipes away her tears, and endeavours to promote the comfort and conciliate the affections of all around her by a cheerful, self-denying regard to their feelings and accommodations.

In short, to be *pityful* or to be *courteous* is only fulfilling

the gentle guidance of the same internal principle under different external circumstances ; and, indeed, there is not any Christian duty which we are required to perform, or any Christian feeling which we are exhorted to cherish towards one another, which, if examined and analyzed, but will be found to have *love* for its basis, since all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

With respect to *courtesy*, we cannot have failed to remark that there is much profession and much appearance of it among those who make no pretensions to Godliness ; but the thing which passes current by this name in the dominions of the god of this world is a base counterfeit of the true shekel of the sanctuary, a tinselled imitation of sterling gold, a worthless semblance of a valuable reality. Courtesy is, strictly speaking, a Christian grace. It is a plant of heavenly origin : this present evil world, like the ground which the Lord hath cursed, is utterly incapable of yielding anything so excellent and lovely. Courtesy cannot grow in selfish nature's soil. It is never found but in the garden of God. It is a fruit of the Spirit, and not a work of the flesh. It is the offspring of charity ; and since it derives its being from Divine grace ; since it is made the subject of a Divine command ; since it is especially calculated to smooth those little asperities which sometimes hinder even "the living stones of the temple" from being so perfectly joined and so fitly framed together as they should be ; since it powerfully tends likewise to remove the prejudices and to allay the enmity so generally entertained by the world towards the church ; above all, since, in combination with other causes, it may contribute to win souls to God, we surely ought not to deem it unsuitable to the purposes of the ministry to make it, as on the present occasion, the subject of our particular and attentive consideration. We shall then proceed to consider

The nature and excellence of Christian courtesy.

I shall take care, as I proceed, to distinguish it from that pitiful appearance of the grace which is so commonly exhibited on the stage of this imposing world. Such a distinction is the more needful because, while some professed dis-

ciples of Christ seem to have substituted in the place of genuine courtesy a conformity to the manners and habits of ungodly men, which very ill consists with that simplicity of character which should distinguish the remnant of true Israelites, there are others who, through an honest disgust with the impertinent fopperies of the world, and an ill-directed fear of becoming infected with the same spirit of guile and hypocrisies, have even run so far into the opposite extreme of churlishness as to be culpably negligent of the proper forms of civilized society.

By *courtesy* we are to understand (as intimated above) “a considerate regard to the feelings and accommodations of others, resulting from a principle of Divine love, and discovering itself by a corresponding behaviour in all the various circumstances of our ordinary intercourse with mankind.”

Among the several qualities essential to Christian courtesy, I shall mention,

I. *Simplicity and Godly sincerity.*

The courtesy of the world is an imposing form, a delusive shadow, an artificial mode or fashion which persons acquire under the discipline of their dancing-master. It is the art of adjusting the features of the face and of managing the gestures of the body, independently of any corresponding affection of the heart; a grimace learned with some degree of difficulty, and for the most part awkwardly performed. It is a hollow, treacherous, unsound appearance; “a bruised reed, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it.” Indeed, so palpable is the imposture that none but children and other credulous and unsuspecting persons, who, to use a familiar phrase, have seen nothing of the world, are at all deceived by it. Mankind in general perfectly well understand that nothing is really meant by the punctilious interchange of their civilities; and yet, strange as it may seem, almost every one will at times at least flatter himself that he plays his part so well, as effectually to blind the eyes of his neighbour, though he has too much penetration to be imposed upon himself. In this respect, however, notwithstanding all the self-complacency and vanity of the human

heart, a man could scarcely fail to be sooner or later convinced of his mistake, if it were not that the affectation of being duped by his masked performances constitutes one of the principal ingredients in the politeness of his acquaintances.

But the courtesy of a Christian is not a mere form. It is not the phantasm of a feeling which has no real existence. It is the outward expression of an inward disposition, the conduct which a benevolent mind will on all occasions instinctively prescribe. It is the natural and unconstrained operation of unfeigned love. Let us but love our neighbour as ourselves, and it will be morally impossible to violate the laws of courtesy; for love worketh no ill to his neighbour. It will teach us cautiously to avoid whatever might unnecessarily wound his feelings; it will dispose us assiduously to study his inclination, ease, and convenience; it will make us anxious to interpret his very looks, that we may even anticipate his requests; it will enable us cheerfully to make a sacrifice of our own gratifications with a view to his. All this is perfectly easy; it is even delightful where love exists without dissimulation; but let this heavenly principle be wanting, take away from the *form* of courtesy the *power*, and it becomes an arduous and irksome task, a yoke grievous to be borne.

2. Another characteristic of Christian courtesy is

Disinterestedness. The courtesy of the world is selfishness disguised. You may be civil to some particular individuals who have it in their power to promote your interest, pleasure, pride, or ambition; nay, you may conduct towards *men in general* with an air of courtesy, while actuated by no higher motives than such as are the natural produce of a "heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." You may be aware, perhaps, that "by this craft," &c. * * * or experience may have proved that civility is necessary to gain their regard to your comfort and accommodation; or possibly you may be courting popularity for its own sake; or you wish to be reputed amiable and well bred; or you are solicitous to be admired as having the manners of a gentleman; in short, your politeness is a kind of

traffic, in which you are engaged upon a mercenary calculation that it will produce for you a certain income, whereon "the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life" may genteelly subsist. In such a case, your courtesy has not the most distant connexion with the love of your neighbour. It originates entirely in the love of this world, and, consequently, in every instance in which it is disappointed of its selfish purposes, it is succeeded by spleen and rudeness.

Christian courtesy seeketh not her own. She studies the feelings and bends to the accommodation of others, hoping for nothing again; and if, on some occasions, requited with coarse and churlish incivility, instead of being overcome of evil she overcometh evil with good; for she is the offspring of that charity which is not easily provoked, but which suffereth long, is kind, and envieth not. The apostle appears to have had this quality of genuine courtesy particularly in view when writing the exhortation of the text, "Be courteous;" and hence adds, "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it."

3. *Uniformity.* The courtesy of the carnal mind is a sickly, humorsome, capricious thing, altogether incapable of persevering exertion. The men of the world constrain us to consider their politeness as something very analogous to the operation of an intermittent fever. For a season they will carry matters to a height manifestly unnatural; treat us with an assiduity of attention, and profess towards us a warmth of attachment which is painfully excessive. But the paroxysm is seldom long. Nature is soon exhausted by these extravagant exertions, and sinks into drowsy silence and listless inactivity. All must have observed this. If the visit of an acquaintance be protracted but a little beyond the expected period of its duration, how is the spirit of artificial civility seen to flag. Let the ordinary forms of salutation have been

exchanged ; let the course of customary inquiries have been mutually proposed and answered ; let the trivial occurrences of the day, the state of the roads, the changes of the weather, have been remarked, and the miserable fund of conversation begins to fail, the interview grows insipid, the scene becomes entirely divested of every appearance of interest, and the host, no longer able to disguise the real feelings of his heart beneath the constrained civility of his manners, is impatient to be relieved from his embarrassment by the speedy departure of his guest.

Nor can you calculate on the treatment you may meet. At one time, most particularly obliging ; at another, without any assignable cause, perversely unaccommodating. * * * The courtesy of this world never continueth at one stay.

But its worthless character is yet more evidently betrayed by a partial and ungenerous respect of persons. This counterfeit virtue allows to smile to a man on the right, and to wound the feelings of a less favoured companion on the left. * * * * *

A gracious courtesy is free from these glaring contradictions. It is without *partiality* as well as *hypocrisy* : the influence of a sincerely benevolent affection extending to every child of man ; an emanation of the Divine nature, a measure of the same mind which was in Christ Jesus. No human being can be excluded from the good will, &c. You may confidently reckon on being courteously treated by men of consistent piety, under all circumstances ; for their conduct is not the result of humour, but principle. It is the work of the law written in their hearts : “ Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

4. It is invariably associated with *humility*. In honour preferring one another. The men of the world do this in appearance : they come abroad clothed with humility, but a spiritual eye soon sees, in all their affected *ease*, it is not the *habit* which properly belongs to them ; it is the *costume* of a better country than that which claims them for its own ; a foreign dress, which, like the traveller in his journey, they find it convenient to assume ; a mere cloak worn in public to cover the deformity of their natural disposition. But the

veil is often of too thin a texture to answer the purpose, and hence, should any fail to pay them that deference and respect which, under this voluntary humility, they yet tacitly demand, the complacency of their looks and urbanity of their demeanour are gone—the mask is thrown off.

The courtesy of those who follow Jesus is the unaffected expression of a poor and contrite spirit. He who has learned of Christ goes and sits down in the lowest place, not to indulge in reflections upon others, or obtain the admiration of man, but because he really feels it is the place which properly belongs to him. He esteems others better than himself, and therefore, without artificial restraint, he can submit to become the servant of all in everything consistent with a conscience “void of offence towards God and towards men;” for such will never attempt to ingratiate himself by abject flattery or worldly compliances. His courtesy is independent of every mean and temporizing expedient; he grovels not in the mire of fleshly wisdom—not in the insinuating and cringing servility of a man-pleaser; it is the honourable subjection of a servant of Christ; it flows from a gracious nobility of soul, directly opposed to that despicable policy which involves a sacrifice of principle to the humour and will of others. This courtesy shrinks from no degradation but that of *vice*; is ambitious of no dignity but that of being conformed to the image of his [God’s] Son. While it despises the scorns of an evil and adulterous generation, and would “resist unto blood, striving against sin,” yet it manifests an obliging readiness of mind to perform the meanest services for the chief of sinners, if so it can administer to their comfort in body or soul.

Our Lord’s conduct in the house of Simon exhibits a fine example of real courtesy. On the one hand, see him meekly submitting to occupy a place at the table of a man who, by the omission of every customary form of hospitality, had treated him with marked incivility and neglect. On the other hand, we behold him manifesting the most tender regard towards a woman that was a sinner, though well aware he was submitting to the utmost degradation and contempt in the eyes of his self-righteous host.

The courtesy acquired in the school of Christ “vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;” it makes no invidious distinctions between “a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel and a poor man in vile raiment.” It cannot say “to him that wears the gold ring, sit thou here in a good place; and to the poor, stand thou there or sit here under my footstool. It minds not high things, but condescends to men of low estate.”

5. To this may be added *vigilance*. It watches for opportunities of exertion, yet is not troublesome—not officious. It originates in a certain kindness of heart which may be called the wakefulness of love.

We sometimes see in persons of undoubted piety an absence of mind; they seem absorbed in contemplation; they hear or observe not what is done by others. But this is a violation of Christian courtesy, an impropriety which obtained no place in the conduct of Him who has left us an example that we should follow his steps. It is a holy exercise misplaced, a kind of selfish spirituality, a sacrifice of public duty at the shrine of private indulgence—the devotion of the closet or the mount performed amid the neglected claims of the multitude.

Be then “followers of God as dear children,” and keep looking unto Jesus till “you are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

It appears from the foregoing that

1. Courtesy is a duty of more than human obligation. A breach of good manners is therefore not merely a departure from an arbitrary rule imposed by the fashion of the world, but a breach of *charity*. It is a violation of the law of love—a transgression of the commandment of God. It is *sin*; and therefore it becomes us, if we have allowed ourselves in the breach of courtesy, to acknowledge the offence and ask forgiveness of God and man. I am aware that it is not unfrequent, nay, absurdly common, for the children of this world to beg pardon, &c., on all those trivial occasions

which involve no real humility of spirit ; but there the matter rests. Not so with a tender conscience : it heals not its wounds so slightly : the children of God take shame to themselves for their asperities and negligences ; they will trace them to a want of more sincere, humble, and active affection for their neighbour ; they will contrast them with the example of their Redeemer ; and while they pray to their Father for forgiveness, they will ask for *all the mind* which was in Christ Jesus, “that they may walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

2. Courtesy to man is perfectly consistent with faithfulness to God. A good soldier of Jesus Christ must bear his testimony against sin ; but our subject prescribes the *manner* only of so doing.

3. Man cannot practise Christian courtesy till he has renounced the world ; for the world is not the school in which true politeness can be acquired. To be kind to the evil and to the unthankful is a lesson of heavenly wisdom. It, and it alone, can “behold the” persecuting “city and weep over it.” In the world you may learn to love them that love you ; but would you acquire the meekness of wisdom, which, unlike the politeness of the world, possesses the intrinsic property of the charity which never faileth, which enables us to be courteous not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, you must enter the school of Christ : “Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Then be no longer “conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

SERMON XIV.

WE ARE VERILY GUILTY CONCERNING OUR BROTHER.

A MISSIONARY DISCOURSE.

Genesis, xlii., 21.—We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

THIS subject affords a fine opportunity to discourse on the nature and power of conscience—the candle of the Lord.—It is not necessary to inquire whether it be ever altogether silenced. * * * *Sleep* and death, however, are two things. See the frozen snake—bring it to the fire! “There is no peace to the wicked;” they are always *subject* to bondage through fear of death.

Johnson said, infidels are of two classes, fools and wretches; if they refuse to think, it is madness; if they do think, it is misery! Why did Felix tremble? Why were “the joints of Belshazzar’s loins loosed,” and why “smote his knees one against the other?” Why not interpret the handwriting favourably—as the record of his greatness? * * * Herod, though a Sadducee, thought that John the Baptist was risen again; his conscience was too much for his creed.—The light will break in through some chink or other. M. de Staël said “it was in the power of adversity to make every man superstitious in spite of himself;” rather say, revive the conviction of a Deity.

See the text—comment on it.—What similarity of circumstances was there in the situation of these men that brought Joseph to mind?—famine!—strange land!—governor treated them roughly!—put three days in hold!—they feel they need pity!—*Conscience* says, “You cannot look for it, for you showed none.”

“Blessed are the merciful.”—We only knew the *fact* before, but now we hear of the entreaties which Joseph

made—his tears!—his cry, O Judah, O Ruben, waxed fainter and fainter, till it died on the ear—and they sat down to eat and drink.—*Wretches!*

You, my friends, are now indulging vengeance on them: in their situation—but expend it not *all* on them! Some nearer you—I mean not your neighbours, but *you*. Have you never enjoyed yourselves when the cry of distress has been heard? * * Yet I mean something higher than this!—While you sit down to eat and drink in spiritual privileges, what millions are in more pitiable circumstances? “We are verily guilty concerning our brother;” and I hope to bring this matter home and convict every one of you!

(Thank God, “The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans,” is not a text often preached on in modern times. Bunyan said, “Master Prejudice fell down and broke his leg;” I would, said he, that he had broken his neck too. * * * Enlarge on the Wesleyan Missions.)

Mr. Ward said, “I have attended many missionary meetings in England, yet in all you indulge too much in congratulation; if you had seen the wide-spread fields of heathenism as I have seen, &c. * * * *nothing* comparatively is done; not enough to wipe off the reproach for long neglect.” “We are verily guilty concerning our brother.” We proceed, then, to notice,

I. The sources from whence these convictions are to be derived.

II. What influence this ought to have on us.

I. The sources from whence these convictions are to be derived.

We cannot condemn a criminal till we convict him. I arraign this whole audience! I charge them with guilt. Consider, then,

1. The relation of the sufferers * * * our brethren! This was the sting in the text—our *brother*: not a stranger, though then our conduct was merciless!—Nabal.—I hope there are

none of his descendants here this morning; you cannot use *his* words in reference to any of the human race. God has made all of *one blood*; all are *your brethren*. See the Hindoo, African, Esquimaux: each says, "Am not I thy brother?" I catechise thee, "Art not thou his brother by infirmities?" * * * His follies and his crimes have stamped him man!

2. The wretchedness of their state. Joseph's state was nothing compared with those who address us. You say, however, "Joseph *besought them*; but the heathen do not beseech us; they are satisfied with their condition." The more pitiable! See the maniac: in his wild ravings he fancies himself a king: is he therefore to be less compassionated? I have seen the infant play with the ensigns of its mother's death. "Precious babe!" said I, "ignorant of thy loss!" So here: their *lack of knowledge* prevents them from being sensible to their condition.

But you say, "Joseph's brethren *saw* the anguish of his soul." True: and here I feel the disadvantage of my position. If you could but see what a missionary sees! Could I but lead you, not to their sensualities—to name which would be a shame—but to their cruelties! Could I show you the devotee lying on sharp spikes, or casting himself under the ponderous car of Juggernaut; could I fix your eyes on children leaving their aged parents to expire on the damp banks of their idol river, or parents casting their children to the crocodiles of the Ganges, or sons lighting the funeral pile of their mothers, you would not keep from me even a ring on your finger.

Philosophers sneer when we talk of the dreadful state of the East; and many Christians concede too much to them. I do not say God cannot save a heathen; the *influence* of the *fact* of the Gospel extends farther than the *Revelation*. In reference to infants, this is certain, and Scripture itself assures us that "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." Yet, after all, without a *preparedness* there can be no heaven, and Ward said he had not found anything resembling real holiness among all the heathen with whom he had been conversant. Idolatry

is not merely a weakness, as some say ; it is a regular system of sensuality and crime. It originates in the vices men love, and hates the virtues which God approves. Do the Scriptures talk lightly of it ? It not only tolerates vices, but *hallows* them ; cruelties and crimes are sanctified. It is iniquity personified ; yea, the devil deified and hell incarnated ! You inquire, “ May there not be with God a secret method of saving the heathen ? ” I answer, if secret, we know nothing about it, and have nothing to do with it. If revealed, where ? The Scriptures say, “ There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus.” The heathen feel their guilt ; yet they know nothing of the fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness. But we shall discover still farther evidences of our guilt by considering,

3. Our orders to succour them. This succour is not optional with us. It is commanded in every injunction to benevolence and beneficence ; and this must, of course, include the highest kinds of them. “ Freely ye have received, freely give,” is the Divine requisition.

The goodness of the Master is often impugned because of the wickedness of those servants who neglect or violate the command. (The brute on the seventh day.) One is rich and the other poor. Does God love the rich more ? No ; but makes him his almoner : but if the rich hoard it up, shall the Master be condemned ? Now our Saviour said, “ Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” Had the command been acted on ever since it was given, the earth would now be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. But “ if the Gospel be so valuable,” say some, “ why has it spread so little ? ” I reply by another interrogatory, Has God no attribute but his *power* ? We know that God will be able to justify himself, but we never shall be able to justify ourselves. “ We are verily guilty concerning our brother.” Another evidence of our guilt will appear when we consider,

4. The possibility of affording them succour. “ Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when *it is in the power of thine hand to do it.*” Our duty to the heathen is

based on no impossibilities. Our inability is *moral, yea, wilful*. We make a difference between the means and the end; the end is *his*, the means are *ours*. There is a difference also between *means* and *miracles*. *Miracles* have ceased, because they are no longer necessary. Without them the Indian castes have been broken. Without them the Hottentot has been elevated and Christianized, though some said the swine would receive the Gospel as soon. Look, too, at the South Sea islands: long we endured sneers, but now behold language and laws, schools and churches, virtue and piety, rising on the ruins of barbarism. If *miracles* were necessary, we should not have been so guilty; for we could not have furnished the gift of tongues. Yet we *could* teach them their native language. I repeat, then, that *means* are ours and results are God's. If you knew a village perishing by a disease, and you had an infallible remedy, and yet should withhold it, would you not be "verily guilty concerning your brethren?" If you see the unsuspecting traveller crossing a rotten bridge, and you warn him not, can you be innocent?

5. Consider the *facilities* we have in this cause of compassion. "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it?" how much more when he simply says, "Wash and be clean." Our duty is to commence missionary exertions, whatever might be the peril. * * * But have you gone forth at a peradventure *if* the heathen were salvable! No; you knew *God's word*; you knew "God so loved the *world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." You knew his intention was that "*all* should know him, from the least to the greatest." Have we then ever done anything magnificent enough to do justice to the declarations of his word? No!

Providence has favoured us also. Governments have been favourable to civil liberty. Thus missionaries have not met with the sufferings we might have reckoned on. Not one out of the whole has been put to death!

The *grace* of God has been with us also. If no result had

taken place, still our duty would have been to go. But God has blessed. See the number of converts; your missions, though once feeble, have become strong, which leads me to observe,

6. That even the efforts we have made in this work furnish evidence of our guilt. What is our zeal? what the number of missionary societies! what think you of *one* preacher for a whole county? But see:

All missionary societies furnish six hundred,* and there are six hundred millions perishing.

Are you now convicted? Is there no heart here that says, "I ought to have gone out in this work." Does not another exclaim, "I have not preached often enough on the subject;" and is it not the language of a third, "I have prayed too little." And methinks I hear from a fourth, "I have given nothing as I ought! so little!" and a fifth confesses, "I could have influenced others, though I could not do much myself." Ah! my brethren, "we are all guilty—verily guilty concerning our brother."

II. What influence should these convictions produce?

If sincere, they will produce four results:

1. The depravity of human nature will be acknowledged. This is denied by many, but there is no need *now* to go to Newgate to prove it. If man were not alienated from the life of God, he *could not be thus* alienated from his brother. You are proof of this degeneracy—the royal law has been broken.

2. Deep and Godly sorrow will be felt. As in the valley of Hadadrimmon, you will retire in secret and mourn apart. Ah! brethren, we cannot mourn too deeply over this fatal negligence.

3. It will lead us to apply to the mercy of God. "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness." The encouragement is, "With him there is mercy and plenteous redemption:" "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

* In the year 1821.

4. It will awaken zeal. A sense of Divine forgiveness will not make you forgive yourselves; you will be up and doing. It will operate, not as an opiate, but as a cordial. The inquiry will be, "What wouldst thou have me to do?"

But if this effect be not produced, I say, as Mordecai to Esther, "If thou altogether hold thy peace, deliverance shall arise from another quarter, but thou and thy father's house shall be consumed." So here—if you will not labour, the work will go on still, but you will be cursed!

Saurin would finish every sermon with reference to death, and Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." Life, then, is the only season in which you can serve your generation.—Wesley would be willing to come down again, be despised again, and persecuted again, for the opportunities you now possess of making known the Saviour!

This may be the *last* collection—a dying grant.

What says your own welfare? I am ashamed to call in selfishness, yet God himself meets our weakness. The ark with Obed—Edom. * * * Contrast this with the conduct of the Jews when they returned from Babylon and neglected to build the house of the Lord. The penury they dreaded came on like an armed man. Hear the reproofing language of the prophet to these idle professors: "Ye have sown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands."

Public-spirited men, though not the richest, are generally

the most successful. At least, "When the eye sees them it blesses them, and when the ear hears them it gives witness to them." Yea, and "devout men carry them like Stephen to their burial, and make great lamentation over them."

What says your own experience? Have you lost by anything done for God? (Anecdote.)

It has been said there are three principles in religion: fear, hope, love, and love the strongest! True, and no love like that a sinner feels to a redeeming God!

What encouragement more than from past success! even *one sinner!* * * * * *

I am not sorry that these applications are so frequent—these Godly vexations. Do you wish exemption from them? Would you bring back the *olden* times before Methodism, when the Church was sleeping in the dark and the Dissenters sleeping in the light? Are you now complaining that God is answering the prayer you have so often offered, "Thy kingdom come?"

Determine what to give with reference to a

Conscience near you;

Eternal judgment before you;

Grace of Him who, "though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

SERMON XV.

THE NEEDFUL CAUTION.

2 Corinthians, vi., 1.—We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

OBSERVE the apostolic description of the Christian ministry.

Its *dignity*, "ambassadors of Christ."—2 Cor., v., 20. Micahiah standing before the two kings of Israel and Judah, 1 Kings, xxii.—*They* sweep stars and suns aside!

Another characteristic is designated in 1 Cor., iii., 9. "We are '*labourers*' (workers) together with God"—not

“sewing pillows to all armholes, to hunt souls.”—Ezek., xiii., 18.

In the text they are designated as “fellow-workers,” true yoke-fellows. Oh! the sympathy they have, bearing each other’s burdens! weeping and rejoicing together!

“We then, as workers together with him, beseech *you*” also. We have besought others “from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum” (Rom., xv., 19); we now beseech *you*

I. The exhortation explained.

II. The exhortation enforced.

I. The exhortation explained.

The subject is “*the grace of God.*”

This sometimes means the *mere favour* of God to us, or anything bestowed upon us as the result of that favour. In this place it must be determined by the context preceding: “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation.” The great plan of reconciliation, then, is “*the grace of God*” in question.

This is called “*the grace of God*” by way of eminence, because,

1. The gift of Jesus Christ is the *highest display* of the goodness of God to man. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”—1 John, iv., 10.

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.”—1 John, iii., 1. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?”—Rom., viii., 32. “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil., ii., 10, 11.

2. Because it is that which procures for us all other blessings. “How shall he not with him freely give us all things?” “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name,

he will give it you:" pardon, peace, holiness, heaven, "through him, this saving grace hath appeared *unto all men.*"—Tit., ii., 11.

Now this grace is to be "*received.*"

1. *The mind* must have a clear perception of God's method of justifying the ungodly—his method of saving sinners. Many call this head-knowledge; what else would they have it? Is not our religion to be "in all knowledge and spiritual understanding?" If we *knew more*, we should *love more*. How few of us can give such "a *reason* of the hope that is in us" as to justify the ways of God to man.

We live on frames and feelings produced by public means of grace, but have no "manna" laid up at home.

2. *The heart* must receive the Saviour. "With the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness." Our affections must choose and submit to him, and our entire selves must be presented as a "living sacrifice."—Rom., xii., 1. Every other trust or dependance must be rejected:

"I nothing have, I nothing am,
But Jesus died for me."

3. There must be a *practical* reception of this "grace of God"—an adorning of it in the conduct; not talking, but working. Thus the *judgment*, the *affections*, the *life*, all receive the grace of God.

Now this grace must not be received "*in vain.*" Many have so received it, and I appeal to many in this congregation if they are not awful witnesses of the fact.

1. The *light* within has become darkness; and "how great is that darkness!" * * * *

* * * *

2. The *love* they once had, where is it? Would they were even lukewarm! but alas! they have waxed cold! their hearts are a moral icehouse; the cold damps of death have gathered round them; their atmosphere chills you and drives back the heart's blood!

3. Their *ways* now have no tendency to glorify God. *

* * * *

Thus is the case, the grace of God has been received in vain!

II. The exhortation enforced.—By what arguments ?

Our difficulty lies not in the paucity of reasons for enforcing the subject, but in the selection. We could urge it upon you by motives drawn from heaven and from hell ; from time and from eternity. By motives from the word of God, &c.—in a thousand forms. By motives drawn from our highest hopes and most alarming fears, &c., &c. But to enumerate a few particulars, we urge it, 1. From a consideration of the *value of the benefit*—God's greatest gift !—the astonishment of heaven !

We value a thing occasionally by the amount it cost us. But ah ! we know not what was the value of this ; for though it was bestowed freely, it cost heaven all !—the pearl of great price ! The treasury exhausted. (The painter who gave away his works because they were above price.)

We prize a thing occasionally by considering what it purchased for us. Value the grace of God thus. It redeems from death and purchases heaven—a *double benefit*.

Oh ! for an angel's tongue to enlarge on its value ! Omnipotence bounded !—the mighty God circumscribed ! We “ were not redeemed by corruptible things, as silver and gold, from our vain conversation, received by tradition from our fathers ; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.”

Behold, then, the value of the benefit !—receive it not in vain ; “ For how shall we escape if we neglect *so great salvation* ?”

If *this* be received in vain, *every other benefit* is in vain. All the sermons you have heard—and how powerful !—all the prayers—and how mighty !—all your afflictions, &c.—your convictions—and how painful !—all the strivings of God's Spirit, &c. The ordinances of his house, the efforts of his ministers, all admonitions, threatenings, promises, all in vain. You have lost the FULL REWARD !—in vain !! In vain pious parents, a religious education, early impressions, good resolutions, &c. In vain the prayers of the church, the sympathy of angels, &c.—all, all *in vain* ! “ Let him alone.” Oh ! terrible word ! *Conscience*, trouble him no more—seared over ! *Spirit of God*, withdraw ; he shall

grieve thee no longer. *Ministers*, alarm him no more—he is asleep—“*Let him alone.*”

3. Consider the *punishment* awaiting such a one. It is bad enough for heathens to perish without law; “But of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under feet the only-begotten Son of God, and counted the blood wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing.” Oh! he shall be “beaten with *many stripes.*” “O Capernaum! it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee.” * * *

There are different degrees of misery in hell, as of happiness in heaven: the lowest place is the backslider’s: the *nethermost* hell is reserved for him who received “the grace of God in vain!” Oh! could I but mourn thy fall aright! “How art thou fallen, Lucifer, son of the morning!” “How is the gold become dim and the fine gold changed!” Oh! could I but sing a requiem to thy soul! But the howlings of despair will prevent thy rest: as in heaven, “They rest not day nor night!” * * * Oh! thou intruder into hell! prepared not for thee! Thou wast born a king! an heir of glory! * * * * *

4. Because this is the only day in which you can receive the grace of God. Be not deceived by the delusion of universalism! When *time* ends with thee, then *eternity*; but *time* is the term for thy salvation. When faith ends, vision succeeds; but *faith* is the way, and it has no operation on a flaming world or descending Judge. Again, the judgment is to be for deeds done *in the body*. “When, therefore, the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence you are.”

Oh! then, to-day, after so long a time, harden not your hearts; “receive not the grace of God in vain!” for if thou do, thy punishment will not only be great, but sealed up on thee forever!—Perpetuity of wo is wo!

Application.

1. To *ministers*.

“Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the

flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers; to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Oh! apostate ministers! Wandering stars to whom is reserved the "blackness of darkness forever." If the backsliding professor has the *nethermost hell*, I know not what hell a fallen minister shall endure!!

Oh! the awful consideration that, "after having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." O if *we* receive the grace of God in vain, better never to have been born! We have a *depositum* to keep, &c.

2. To people. With you I have mainly to do. "I beseech you, therefore, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." I? nay, "*We*," all; I would cluster around me every minister you have ever heard, and with one voice, "*We* beseech you." But many of them have gone home! Their voice was as a skilful instrument, but they can beseech you no longer. But could they, heaven would echo back, "*We* beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." Nay, apostles, martyrs, would join in the solemn expostulation, and with united voice exclaim, "Receive not, oh! receive not the grace of God in vain."

And now I warn you of your danger. What! you cavil at it and think it vain! "In danger?" Yes, else you are not in a state of probation; else the heart is not deceitful; else "the devil goes not about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour!" "In danger?" Yes, or all the exhortations of the apostles are vain, nay, deceitful, false alarms; for say they not that you may forget that you were ever "purged from your old sins?"

I appeal to *yourselves*; all preconceived opinions apart, do you not *feel* your danger? Is there no consciousness of it? Have you never lost any part of the grace you have received?—If so, why may you not lose the whole? If every part is incorruptible seed, why has any part died away? "In danger?" Yes, if any ever did fall, even *one*, from Adam to Christ, from Christ till now.—Have you not seen the beacon which Paul set up? "Holding faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concern-

ing faith, have made shipwreck : of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander.”

Many of you are near it—in shoal water. Oh ! pray for a spring-tide of grace, to get you off the shoals—you have often scraped the bottom—often struck, &c., &c.

SERMON XVI.

CHRIST'S LEGACY TO HIS DISCIPLES.*

John, xiv., 27.—Peace I leave with you.

THE dying words of a friend are much valued. We view the soul as on the wing, and eagerly catch its last accents. It is impossible to consider the situation of the apostles of our Lord and Saviour, at the time when these words were addressed to them, without feelings of tenderest sympathy. Their Master knew that his time was drawing near, when he should be parted from them, and seemed scarcely to know how to introduce the painful relation. He had put off the subject till the very evening before the event took place, and to within a few hours of the time when he knew he should be betrayed. He had taken his leave of the world, as we see in chapter xii., from the 44th verse to end, in which he sums up the whole of that doctrine which he had been preaching during his three years' ministry. He asserts his own divinity : “ He that seeth me seeth him that sent me ;” † and his atonement : “ I came to save the world.” ‡ On these two hangs all the mystery of our salvation ; he also shows how these truths are to be operative in man, and produce in him the effect intended, even by *faith* ; for that, though God has done all that he could do on his part, yet it is left to us to receive or reject the salvation he has provided ; hence he says in the 46th verse, “ Whosoever *believeth* on me shall not abide in darkness.” He then enforces the necessity of receiving him as the promised Messiah by the consideration

* This was Mr. Summerfield's first sermon in Dublin.

† Verse 45.

‡ Verse 47.

of the judgment of the great day. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." But, on the other hand, he declares those who thus believe in him shall have life everlasting.*

The first direct intimation which the disciples seem to have had that the hour of his departure had come was after he had given that moving proof of his affection mentioned in chapter xiii., 21: the evangelist says, "When Jesus had thus said, he was *troubled in spirit*, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." After Judas had gone out, he again renewed the mournful subject. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say unto you." On Peter's professed zeal to go with him anywhere, Jesus gently reprov'd him by assuring him that even *he* would that night deny him thrice. It is in this way that the chapter from which our text is taken is introduced. A solemn silence seems to pervade the little assembly; Peter, though he abhors the idea of denying his Lord, is confounded at the prediction; and such is the dismay and sorrow which fill their hearts in the awful suspense, that all power of utterance or reply seems taken away. The scene is opening, the tragedy is about to commence, and they now hear it announced that friends will forsake while enemies accomplish the murderous deed.

Such thoughts as these seem to fill their breasts when their Master breaks the silence: "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in *me*. Ye trust in God, place the same trust in *me*. I go to prepare a mansion for you, and, when this is done, will come again and receive you unto myself." The bare mention of his *coming again* brings some consolation, and Thomas takes courage to ask, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" Jesus replies, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." He then proceeds at considerable length, with such assurances as would tend to sooth their dis-

* Verse 50.

tracted minds, and promises that whatsoever they should ask the Father in *his* name they should receive it; that he himself would not be long absent from them; he would not leave them orphans! and that the Comforter, who should come in his name, should abide with them forever. He then gives them his last will in the words of our text: "Peace I leave with you:" not gold, or silver, or titles, or worldly honours, but *peace*; and that peace not such as the world could give, but *my* peace, says Jesus!

- I. Show that by nature we are not at peace with God
- II. Consider the kind of peace that Jesus leaves us.

I. By nature we are not at peace with God.

What more finished picture could be given of our fallen state than this, that we are enemies to God by nature; that therefore in this state we are not *at peace* with him, &c.—However galling the yoke may feel to the neck of a sinner to acknowledge this, it is an assertion made in this book, and an assertion which may be proved by *argument* and *experience*.

Let me, however, qualify the term. The sinner may not hate God as his *Creator*, but he does hate him as his Sovereign, his Lawgiver, and his Judge. As his *Lawgiver*, he hates that book wherein the revelation of his law or will is made; this he cannot deny. The commandments of God are grievous to him, and his heart revolts against them. As his *Sovereign*, he hates his righteous sceptre, and says, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways." I appeal to the sinner, and ask, dost thou not wish that Sovereign was less *holy* than he is; that there was in him a mixture of impurity, to countenance thy corrupt desires and inclinations; less *true* than he is, that he might not take cognizance of every little prevarication and falsehood; less *wise*, that he might not be acquainted with thy hidden springs of wickedness; less *omnipresent*, that he was not present at all thy outward abominations? As his *Judge*, would not the sinner wish him less *strict* than he is, less rigid and inflexible in the judgment he will hereafter

pronounce upon him; less *powerful*, that he might not be able to punish him to the extent threatened and deserved! Thus to what level would he reduce God? To his own level; to a sink of iniquity and corruption like himself. He would detract from all his attributes except *mercy*, whereas a God all mercy is a God unjust, and a God unjust is no God at all! Thus the sinner would rob him of his omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, his justice, and dwindle him down till, if possible; he would extirpate his very being!

If, therefore, in common life, a subject of an earthly king should aim a blow at one of his prerogatives, or one of the attributes of his crown, he is counted a traitor, a rebel to his lawful sovereign, and is punished accordingly; so the creature who would derogate from any of the essentials of the King of Kings is a rebel to that Sovereign, his very enemy, and, as such, is subject to the decree of the High Chancery of Heaven, &c.—“The soul that sinneth it shall die.”

I trust I have shown from *Scripture*, from *experience*, from *argument*, to a demonstration, that the sinner is a very enemy of God! and, however galling the yoke and vile the opprobrium, he must bear it.

But it was the great mission of Heaven in sending Jesus to restore peace. He was the *great* Ambassador of God! Oh! what condescension! to reflect that God, who was the party injured, should make the overtures of reconciliation: he, against whom we were fighting, who was never at war with us, *beseeches us* to be reconciled to himself. Hence, when the angel announced the birth of Jesus, it was “Peace upon earth”—not peace in *heaven*—and hence also Jesus leaves us *peace*: “*My* peace I give unto you.”

II. Consider the kind of peace that Jesus leaves us.

My peace. He himself contrasts his peace with that which the world affords its votaries, and therefore we shall endeavour to run the comparison in a few particulars.

1. The peace which the world gives, being only created by perishing objects, is liable to perish also; hence the inspired penman tells us “they all perish in the using.” And

none are so foolish as those who thus make to themselves peace. If it arise from *riches*, they take to themselves wings and fly away. If from *honour*, it is a mere *bubble* which hangs upon the lip of flattery, and soon drops into the ocean of forgetfulness. If from *pleasure*, however refined its nature, it perishes in the using.

I speak not of those filthy pleasures in which thousands delight, but of such as are suitable to a more refined taste; and how do these consume away! The pleasing scene, the rural cot, the dashing cascade, the ivied turret, the humble vale, the aspiring mount, &c., &c., all die away!

Perhaps all the peace which this world gives its votaries, or offers them, may be reduced to one or other of these heads; and how insufficient these are to give peace to an immortal mind you know.

Not so the peace of Jesus! It does not perish in the using. The *riches* which he gives are unsearchable, and, being hid in himself, are eternal and durable as himself. They do not flee from the possessor, but enrich him with the true riches in this and in the world to come! The *honour* which he bestows does not depend upon the uncertain applause of a blinded rabble. It is the honour of Him with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The Christian seeks this honour from above; and as his are the true *riches*, so his is the true *honour*. The *pleasures* he delights in do not fade away, but are ever unfolding new beauties to his ravished soul. His joys are joys unspeakable and full of glory. He enjoys the pleasures which are at God's right hand *for evermore*; the pleasure which arises from the testimony of his conscience that he pleases God. "*My* peace I give unto you," says Jesus; "not as the world giveth give I unto you."

2. But even supposing that peace derived from hence were durable, that the person preserve his *riches*, his *honours*, and his *pleasures*, they are not solid enjoyments; the peace which they produce is not a satisfactory one; it has been sufficiently proved by *experience* that these things do not make a man happy. On the contrary, how often do they produce unhappiness; how often do they cause the

sorrowful exclamation, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" And all this is inevitable: the soul is of nobler birth; such company as these is too low, too mean for it. It is the offspring of an immortal; and, though lying in this ruined, debased state, yet, the moment that it sees its lost and undone condition, its language is that of the jailer at Philippi: "What shall I do to be saved?" The soul, if left to itself, is ever restless after that true enjoyment: hence the pleasure-taker runs from scene to scene; the debauchee from one haunt of vice to another: hence the card-table succeeds the dance; the play the card-table; the ball after the theatre; those souls which were made for nobler pleasures are running as if out of breath from one object to another, thirsting still, and still unsatisfied. But when awakened it acknowledges its original, and asks how it shall arrive at its own abode. The soul can be satisfied with nothing but God; if it feed upon anything else, it is like one eating husks; it feels a disappointment, a gnawing, a vacuum: when enjoying the beauties of creation—the pleasures of ever so refined an imagination—it is the secret language of the heart, "But these are not my God." There is nothing savoury in them to the palate. * * * * *

But the peace of Jesus is like himself: it is a peace which passes all understanding; it is a peace which the world knows nothing of; a peace which the world can neither give nor take away.—*My* peace I give unto you, &c., &c. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee."

3. Again, the peace of this world is not only perishing in its own nature, but it is liable to perish from another cause. The peace it gave its votary is often taken away by the very hand that gave it, and that which yesterday was the cause of all his peace and joy, is to-day the source of all sorrow. (See the parent and the child.) Man is so fickle, that we cannot depend a moment on the peace which arises from him. How often have we seen fortune as if emptying her lap into the bosom of her slave to-day, and leaving him the next, shorn and undone. How have we known a proud Haman to be exalted to the pinnacle of human greatness

one day, and the next hanged upon a gibbet by the very man by whom he had been so caressed. How have we known a Menzikoff in our day the dread of Russia; this day fawned upon by high and low, rich and poor, supreme power seeming to sit upon his brow, and nod her commands, which none dare disobey; the next day an outcast and a slave, banished into Siberia by the very man who had thus elevated him. How have we not seen, with regard to our Lord and Master, the rabble one day crying out Hosanna to the Son of David, and the next day, with louder strains, "Crucify him, crucify him!"

But not so the peace of Jesus! No time, no place can take this from us. "For I am persuaded that neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Jesus our Lord." *My peace, says Jesus, I give unto you.*

4. But even supposing that this should not be the case, supposing the stream of your peace should not be diverted from its channel, yet the spring may run dry; the inability of that friend upon whom you rely may overcome his inclinations; or death may rob you of that treasure, and you thus lose the staff upon which you leaned and depended.

But you need not fear this with regard to Jesus; he is the King eternal as well as unchangeable; the source can never run dry. *My peace, says Jesus, I give unto you.*

5. But what peace can the world give in the hour of adversity? Jesus particularly contrasted his peace with that of the world at this juncture—the disciples were then filled with sorrow; what peace could the world give *them*? How often is the worldling left to himself in this extremity? To such he would say, "Miserable comforters are you all." See Voltaire dying. See a parent's heart bleeding from the loss of a child.

But the peace of Jesus will be the sweetener of life, the solace of death, and the cordial which will support you when passing through the dark valley; "in all time of our tribu-

lation, in all time of our prosperity, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment."

Application.

1. To penitent sinners; he *gives* this peace freely!
2. To believers; he *leaves* it with you!

And what is the peace of the wicked? Isaiah says, "It is as the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt!" Jude says, "Foaming out his own shame!" and if this be the *peace* he has, what is his *tumult*? When the diabolical principles which rage within begin to rise; when the steel of passion which has been so often hardened in the fire of hell is applied to his flinty heart; when struck by diabolical agency, how do the sparks fly around from every member of his miserable body: see his eyes, the windows! the flames of hell are already kindled within—his whole frame is convulsed.—Or, when the smallest breath of anger, disappointment, envy, or malice blows upon his soul, how is the filth which lies at the bottom of his heart excited and the whole sea of passion in a tumult! "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked!"

But what is the peace which Jesus gives? Oh! what a change when His peace pervades the soul! when, being justified by faith, we have, after all this turmoil, "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Jesus has spoken peace! the waves have ceased; the heart has vibrated to the sound: peace, peace from every string: the sweetest unison now prevails! "*My* peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

SERMON XVII.

THE BELIEVER'S HOPE.

1 Peter, i., 3-5.—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

A SLIGHT glance at this epistle will convince any one that those to whom it was written were then in a suffering state. “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, being found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (Some contend that it was a *fiery* trial—that they were literally called to burn.) “For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.”* “But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; having a good conscience, that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing.”†

The apostle calls those whom he addresses *strangers* (1st verse); and though this may mean the dispersed Jews (as in James’s epistle), who were strangers in those heathen countries in which they resided, yet in another sense they were strangers, even as all Christians should be while here.

The apostle of the Gentiles, when writing to the Hebrews, says, “Here we have no continuing city;” we are therefore strangers here: and in the same epistle, speaking

* 1 Pet., ii., 19.

† Chap. iii., 14-17. See also chap. iv., 12, to the end.

of the worthies, he says, "They confessed they were strangers and pilgrims." St. Peter in this epistle says the same: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims," &c.—Chap. ii., 11. Jacob says he was a sojourner, as all his fathers were. Enlarge on this. Now the excellent of mankind have always considered themselves strangers in this point of view; and no true Christian should be ashamed of the title. How little does a pilgrim want! So the Christian. This, says he, is not Jerusalem; this is not my God. When wealth pours into a church * * * John Nelson's opinion.*

Yet though in these circumstances, he does not repine, but breaks forth as in the text, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

In our text we notice three particulars.

I. An expression of thanksgiving: "Blessed," &c.

II. The privilege of all true believers. "They are according to his abundant mercy begotten again to a lively hope," &c.

III. This inheritance is reserved for them, and they are kept for it.

I. An expression of thanksgiving.

We before hinted that, painful as was their situation, the apostle *rejoices* in it; no sooner does he close his salutation (verse 2) than he seems anxious to break forth in praise to God. All the apostles were of the same mind: see Paul in Romans: "If so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together." James also: "Count it all *joy* when ye fall into divers temptations." St. John, when admitted to see the heavenly glory, was told, "These are they which come out of great tribulation." Now there is no soul

* John Nelson was one of the early preachers in connexion with Mr. Wesley, and, in the language of Southey, "Had as high a spirit and as brave a heart as ever Englishman was blessed with."

of man but should join in this thanksgiving. Find out the vilest sinner, it would be his language: "Blessed be God, I am not in hell." Trace the cause of blessedness from the vilest sinner to the saint, and they heighten in proportion. (Wesley's hymn.)

In the Old Testament God is always called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because with them the covenant was *immediately* made; and their children, by addressing God by that title, were reminded of that covenant, and by faith pleaded the fulfilment thereof. (Solomon's address.)

But in the New Testament this is laid aside, and he is called by a more endearing title, "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," the mediator of the better covenant, established in all things and sure: and when they now address God by this title they are reminded of the covenant made with Jesus and ratified by his own blood. Thus imboldened, they plead with God that, having given his Son, he will with him give them all things. The believer therefore has a more endearing title by which to address God. God himself has now, by his Son, assumed *human nature*, and he can speak to him face to face, and yet live. (Enlarge.—2 Cor., 1., 3. Eph., 1., 3.)

II. Though all may join in general thanksgiving, yet now we come to that part in which believers only can join.—"According to his abundant mercy."—Every blessing to man flows through the stream of God's *mercy*.—Beautiful as the word *mercy* is, it is too mean to express the strength of the idea which the love of God should convey to us. Hence the apostles frequently add other words to heighten its signification; language is too barren; the term is too *poor* for that *infinite, disinterested, causeless compassion* in the mind of God towards abject worms. So Paul (Titus, iii., 5, 6) seems lost to *strengthen* the word *mercy*: "Which he shed on us abundantly." Again: "God who is *rich* in mercy;" and in our text, "*abundant* mercy." It is abundant beyond *measure*. *Spontaneous, unasked for* by man.—

A man once thought he had sinned too much to be for-

given ; and putting all his sins, with all their aggravations, on one side of a paper, he fled to a lonely castle — while there, he wrote with his pencil all the promises he could think of upon the other side. And lo, he found such an *abundance of mercy* that his *sins* were lost, *swallowed up* in God ! ! — Enlarge here on God's mercy being the moving spring *primarily*, and the cause of Jesus and all the blessings from Jesus. He "hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." When Christ died, the hopes of his followers died also ; we cannot think of their state without peculiar emotion ; their hopes were buried with their Master : "We thought it was he who should have redeemed Israel." (Enlarge on similar texts.) It was then a *dead* hope ; but now, when Christ rises, the hope again revived, and flourished again ; and as their hope had been entombed with him, so with him it left the tomb. It rose with their Master, and was now a living, a *lively* hope : "He hath begotten this hope in us again." The hope within us had *died*, but he again *begot*, again *produced* it.

(Dwell on the hope of the Christian : "It is the *anchor* of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth into that within the veil whither our forerunner has for us entered. He who has this hope purifies himself even as he is pure." Show who are possessors of this hope and have claim to it ; the sinner's is a dead hope, for Christ has never risen in his heart). This is the hope that shall never perish again, like that of the hypocrite, &c.

"By the resurrection from the dead." We are not to suppose that the apostle excluded the other parts of our Lord's life, his sufferings or death, but that he includes the whole in this one *in the resurrection* ; for it put the crown on all the rest. Show that his death would have been of no avail to us if he had not risen again. Though he died for our sins, and thus, by his death, paid the price of our redemption, yet we could never have laid hold on God by the faith of Jesus if we had not been assured of God's acceptance of him, and of his thus rising for our justification. (Enlarge here.) Hence the apostles preached Jesus and the resurrection.

Now God hath *begotten* us ; we are now his children, and entitled to the inheritance of children ; ours is no empty title ; if children, then heirs, says St. Paul. So St. Peter : being children, we are entitled to an inheritance *incorruptible*, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Here is an allusion to the terrestrial Canaan, which was corruptible—but this is *undefiled*, untainted, unsullied ; not annoyed by wicked men, with which that land was polluted.

Fadeth not away. The crown at the Olympic games was composed of perishable materials ; but this is one which “neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.” (Quote what the various apostles and evangelists say on it.) St. Paul tells us what the possession is, “*heirs of God.*” What the glory will be we know not ; but when Christ shall appear we shall be *like him*. Let this satisfy us. Let us not again forget that this is procured by Jesus Christ for us ; with him, *everything*.

III. It is reserved for them, &c. Oh ! the contrast ; reserved in *heaven* ! this marks its *security*—allusion to the *bulwarks* made use of, and the outposts to defend a country ; garrisoned at every point, fully equipped to defend the possession or estate. And has God made heaven thus secure to us ? Does he guard our possession by his own Almighty power, and ensure us the full enjoyment of it ? What arm, then, can rob us of our estate ? He himself is our *shield*, our *defence*. Fear nothing, little Jacob.

But you are kept for it—allusion to the ancient practice when an heir to a great possession is born : he was taken into a strong fortress, and there kept, lest he should be destroyed. And does God thus keep his children ? Heirs to such a vast estate ? Does he snatch them and lodge them under his wing ? Round all their glory he makes a defence. Oh ! how secure is the believer in Christ ! the believer in the *present tense* ; love God.

But yet man is not to be saved as a machine. Though his salvation is all of grace, yet faith is the instrument by which man must apprehend God. Our weapons are spiritual ; and we must keep a constant hold of the promises of God by faith. Faith brings the blessings down.—Enlarge.—Faith is as the hand to the body.

All heaven is concerned for us ; God's almighty power is pledged to protect us. What, then, can harm us if we be followers of that which is good ?

SERMON XVIII.

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH.

Isaiah, xi., 10.—And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people ; to it shall the Gentiles seek : and his rest shall be glorious.

How precious are the promises contained in this chapter ! “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them.” “For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (equivalent to Zechariah, ix.). If it be inquired how or by what means this great work shall be effected, the answer from our text is obvious : “In that day,” that is, the Gospel dispensation. *A day* in Scripture is an indefinite portion of time ; Christ himself calls his dispensation a day : “Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.” It is called “a day of salvation ;” hence Paul applied it to his time : “Behold, now is *the day* of salvation.” It is with us the same day ; the day of the Gospel dispensation is now : “The sun of Righteousness is shining with healing in his wings.”

- I. Consider what is meant by the root of Jesse.
- II. How it shall be an ensign for the people.
- III. The blessed promise, “To it shall the Gentiles seek.”
- IV. Consider the glorious rest promised to such.

(Get our minds in a proper frame ; sit as under the cross, as if you saw the blessed Jesus exalted.)

- I. Consider what is meant by the root of Jesse.

The person meant by this is the Lord Jesus Christ, that

complex being who is very *God* and very *man*. In our text we have,

1. His *Divine* nature pointed out; and it is very important to observe it. He is called "*the root of Jesse*;" for, as God, he was the first of all beings; the root of *Adam* as well as every living thing. Hence David in spirit called him Lord: "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." But though his *Divine* nature only is pointed out here, yet I take it,

2. That his human nature is *implied*. Turn to the first verse: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow up out of his roots." Here is his humanity: he *grows* out of the stem of Jesse. Observe the wonderful beauty of the figure.—Through all the changes of David's family they are reduced from royalty to abject poverty; no mark of dignity attaches itself to them, and yet God had wonderfully preserved the line distinct, and it was just about to expire when the Messiah came. But the prophet does not say, "A rod shall come out of *David*," but of *Jesse*; it shall spring, not from the *royal* branches, all these are lopped off; but, like an old tree cut down, the stump only remaining in the ground, a *rod*, or, as the word may mean, scion, sprig, a little stem shall shoot up, as if the old stump were left in the ground for this purpose; a straight, slender twig shall come out and grow up to perfection. God passes by all the stately cedars of the Jews, and pitches upon the neglected stem—"his roots;" they barely remained, yet these roots send forth *the Branch*. (Dwell on the fine idea.) Thus Christ is the stem as well as the root of Jesse; hence St. John beautifully connects the two ideas:* "The root and offspring of David." Perhaps God meant to show that, in sending his Messiah into the world, the most humble state should be his: hence he pitches not on royalty, but traces him to David's first state of humiliation: "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness: and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

II. How it shall be an ensign for the people

* Revelation, xx.

It may have two meanings, referring either to the standard itself, which was called the ensign, or to the standard-bearer. In both these senses it will apply to Jesus Christ.

The standard was used *first* in the *camp*; the hosts were marshalled under it. In the camp it is like the pillar of fire and cloud; it will station with thee in the camp. *Secondly*, in the *march* it went before and led on the company. So our standard is raised on high and carried before us, and we are commanded to follow the cross. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Show the need that Christians have to be encouraged in the march by the ensign being carried before them. *Thirdly*, in the *battle*. (Constantine.) So long as the standard is kept elevated, victory may yet be gained; it is the token of conquest being yet undecided—the battle not finally won. So in our fights, so long as our standard is unfurled we rally to it and fight beneath it—victory is *certain*, not dubious; for the standard cannot be plucked out of the hand of Omnipotence. *Fourthly*, it is used in the *triumph*, in exultation, and of joy. Thus, then, shall it be when all Christ's cross-bearers will come forth with, not laurels, but "everlasting joy upon their heads."

But, 2. As to the ensign itself. In this point of view it answers to Christ: he stands for an ensign. 1. See Mount Calvary—Paul was not ashamed of a crucified master. 2. He is lifted upon the pole of a preached Gospel. Paul to the Galatians: they had not seen Jesus with their eyes, and yet they had, says St. Paul, seen him crucified among them. It was doubtless in this sense he meant it. On this pole he is *now* elevated, and shall continue to be to the end of the world. Miserable are those Christless sermons in which this is hardly touched upon.

III. What a blessed promise! the Gentiles shall yet flock to this standard. We had a proof of this in the wise men—they sought to it; next in the Syro-Phœnician woman, of whom our Lord said, "Great is thy faith," &c.—See the case of the Roman centurion—next Cornelius, a *seed* of Gentilism, which produced the conversion

of all his house. And see in our day, whenever the light is sent abroad, how the poor heathen flock to it. All Gentiles; we too are Gentiles, and have sought this ensign. However it is despised now, the nations shall seek to it, for "Righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

IV. The glorious rest promised.

Some think the *rest* here refers to the building of the Jewish temple. For above five hundred years the Shechina inhabited a moveable tabernacle, and this was never called his rest. But when Solomon built the Temple, God said he would dwell there, and that should be the place of his rest. This was the Holy of Holies, in which he displayed his glory between the cherubim; and it might well be called a *glorious rest*. At times the high-priest could not enter in because of the glory of this rest. Now, this Holy of Holies was a type of the Christian and Gospel dispensation, our Mount Zion—this hill of the Lord. This is his rest; and how often has the glory of the Lord been displayed among us? Witness Paul's prayer for the Ephesians: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." This rest is peculiarly the Lord's. But, whether it refer to this or not, there is a rest which those experience who seek to this standard, a rest from sin here; but oh! what will it be in the world to come, when all his saints shall stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion, clothed with his glory! "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into

the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him." (Cheer the Christian up with the prospect given of this rest in the 5th Revelations.) "And they sang a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

Application.—The standard has now been lifted up: Christ has been set forth, &c., on the pole of this Gospel. *Sinner*, hast thou sought to it? Christ suffered this for thee!—See his blood, his hands, &c., and wilt thou sin against so much love? Oh! seek to it.

Believer, this is thy ensign; it is thy banner, under which alone thou art safe in the march; under which alone thou canst fight in security, and by which alone thou wilt triumph. Hold on! the rest shall yet be glorious—we were Gentiles, and had no right to the covenant of promise after the flesh. Come, poor pilgrim, after all thy fighting here, though doomed to hardship and many a battle, there is a rest, a glorious rest. Only take care to keep thy life hid with Christ in God, and, if thou put it in this casket, it will be preserved till that day as a precious jewel when Christ brings forth this treasure and shows those costly deposites.

SERMON XIX.

TO CHILDREN.

AN INCENTIVE TO EARLY PIETY.

Proverbs, viii., 17.—I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

WRITTEN by Solomon—wise sayings. How did he obtain wisdom? What text in New Testament similar to it? Now he personifies her.

By *wisdom* here we are not to understand that of the world, but that which St. Paul preferred above all knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the beginning of it; it is the first lesson it teaches; many think they are very wise, and yet are ignorant of this first lesson of wisdom.

Two things are here implied: First, that we have lost wisdom; we never seek until we discover we have lost; indeed, men do not think that they are ignorant. (*Flavel*, vol. ii., p. 179.) They, 1st, seemed to themselves wise; 2d, only lovers of wisdom; 3d, only rhetoricians, or those who could *speak* on wisdom, but knew little of it; 4th, idiots, with increase of learning—laying by pride.—Spiritualize.—Dr. Livingston—like a vessel cast into the sea.—Yet many say they *know* God; but I mean a knowledge which implies *acquaintance*, as if I asked you, “Do you know the President, or the Mayor of New-York?” Now if you *feel* this you cannot rest easy; the chicken might teach you, or the strayed lamb; offer the lamb a handful of sweet grass, or the lost chicken the sweetest bread, they run away; so a person who feels he has lost God takes no rest, &c.

It implies, secondly, that, unless we find wisdom *here*, and know it experimentally, we can never dwell with God here after, for heaven differs not— * * *

- I. Where may I find wisdom?
- II. How am I to seek it?
- III. How may I obtain it?

I. Where may I find wisdom ?

Solomon describes wisdom as saying, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old;" and again, "The Lord giveth wisdom;" and Paul says, "To God only *wise*, be glory through Jesus Christ forever." Now, wherever God has appointed to meet us, there wisdom may be found; it is true, he is everywhere by his essential presence, even in hell, but not *found* there; but wherever his gracious and special presence, &c.

1. He is not to be found among any of those scenes which are acted upon the Sabbath. If you seek there, you only increase the distance.—Gardens of pleasure—steamboats—Broadway—many keep the Sabbath only in church hours.

2. Nor at the card or gambling table.—Locke and his friends.—Mr. Wesley and prayer.—I regret that steamboats allow it * * * * *

3. Nor in the theatre. Let me dwell here.—I dare to name it (*Burder*)—and who is the man now that at noonday would be seen there? It is only when night draws her curtain.—I have been in the secret. (Chesterfield.)—I left them; they did not leave me.—Christians of old abhorred them—even pagans.—Objection, "I can learn as much as at a sermon." An elegant writer observes—Tillotson—Bishop—Harvey and the lady.

Where then? Why, hear the Lord, Ex., xx., 24: "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen; in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." Now his name is recorded here—the Lord's house.—How pleasing to look on you! Who would not rather see you here than at a play-house? "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion."

But not merely in these large places; for "where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;"—in private, Matt., vi., 6: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Your Father *sees* you, and that not with indifference.

But he has revealed himself in a book—"Able to make wise unto salvation."—Search the Scriptures.—The greatest and best of men have been remarkable for their love to the Bible. Wesley—"I have thought that I am a creature of a day, passing through life, as the arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf till a few moments hence I am no more seen! I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven: how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself hath condescended to teach me the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book! Oh! give me that book! At any price give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book. Here I am far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone: only God is here. In his presence I open, I read this book; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights: Lord, is it not thy word, 'If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God?' Thou 'givest liberally and upbraidest not.' Thou hast said, 'If any man be willing to do thy will he shall know I am willing to do:' let me know thy will."

II. How we are to seek wisdom.

1. Get your mind deeply impressed with the promise, "They that seek me *shall* find me;" believe it as the word of God, that can never fail. Unless in your public and private devotion you are deeply impressed with this, you will not find.—Be it according to thy faith.—This is faith of which you have heard so much; it is believing the word of God: "He who cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" he will reward them with this knowledge of himself: the word preached only profits when mixed with faith in them that hear it.

2. Firmly believing that God will keep his word, you now ask him; for he only giveth to them that ask him: "If any man or *child* lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to

all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." This was Solomon's way; oh! how many parents teach their children to get money. But see the 10th and 11th verses of the context: "Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." Yes, they must part with it.—True, they hold it as long as they can, as the miser dying feeling his gold; but it descends to others. But

3. Persevere in seeking. A beggar would not come and leave his petition, and return no more; if he get not the answer then, he comes again and again.—You know it takes you a long time, frequently, to learn your tasks; you do not throw the book away because it is not at first acquired. Come again and again; plead the promise—plead it very humbly; tell the Lord you know that you do not deserve it, but that he has promised it for the sake of his Son, and say, Lord, I am a little child.—And do not be discouraged because you know so little: "Who hath despised the day of small things?"

4. And always obey up to any light you receive, however small—he will give more grace—do what he reveals—leave undone what he forbids; you once said naughty words, now you know it is wrong—forsake it; you once played with bad boys—now you would not play with a sweep—keep yourselves *unspotted*.

III. *When may I obtain it?*

Why, this is just the time; to you I emphatically say, this is the accepted time; "*early*" in life, just as the bud is opening, offer God the flower; *you* have a special promise; God peculiarly loves little children. Oh! how different to a wrinkled sinner, debauchee—casting his old polluted carcass, which is a sink of iniquity, upon God. See the woman who was forty years hearing sermons, and yet thought her soul a large bone. * * * *

"*Early*" in the day: "Early will I call upon thee;" "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning." Oh! it is so sweet a time; and then you come down to breakfast so heavenly looking, and apply to your lessons; and God blesses

you in school all day. Yes, and let me tell you that Dr. Doddridge * * * *

Now, my dear children—I love you ; I hope to meet you in heaven where Jesus is, and I know that this is the way ; I do not tell you that I believe it, but I *know* it : will you come along with me ? Mark the promise : “ They *shall* find me.” I promise you—Solomon promises you. But a greater than I or Solomon—*God* promises you.

I will pray for you in the morning ; will you all meet me at a throne of grace in the morning ? Which of you will ? —(Conclude by an ejaculatory prayer.)

SERMON XX

THE BELIEVER LONGING AFTER IMMORTALITY.

2 Corinthians, v., 1-4.—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.

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven ;

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened : not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

WHAT is the principle which causes the martyr to meet the stake with a smile, as if going to a wedding-feast ? What induces the missionary to bear every clime ? What bears the private Christian up above all the trials to which he is exposed ? It is the subject which animated the apostle's mind in the words before us.

The Christian and the man of the world are not more distinguished than by this one thing : the latter is taken up with time ; he sees not afar off ; his heart and treasure are both *here* ; but the Christian looks not at the things which are seen, but at those which are unseen and eternal.

I. Enlarge a little upon the subject the apostle presents to our view. Death was a subject familiar with him ; he had looked at it in every feature. Mark the familiarity and propriety of his expressions :

“*Earthly house :*” Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

“*Tabernacle :*” The Arab’s tent not more liable to be struck—and we are gone.

But is not this the lot of all men? Why, then, do you not all view it thus? Is there a shrinking from this thought? Ah! death is not familiar with you. Wherefore the difference between you and the believer? You cannot follow us now in the text.

“*We have a building of God*”—he looked with rapture to the time when he should receive his glorious body; this is *God’s building*, “*eternal*”—not earthly—“*in the heavens*,” fitted for that pure state of enjoyment.

“*We know this.*” It is no conjecture.

II. The impression this made on the apostle’s mind.

“*We groan,*” not that we are querulous or complaining, but we are from home! like pilgrims in the desert, like children in a far country, we sigh, “I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”

“*Being burdened.*” Carrying a load with us; a load of corruption, pressing down the spirit and driving our duties into a corner; burdened with sickness, disease; burdened with temptation, always buffeted by the powers of hell. See preceding chapter, verse 8: “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair.”

Yet, in the midst of all this, with the big tear in our eye, for, believe me, we *feel* our sorrows, we exclaim as in the 17th verse, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Our tears form a rainbow—and faith brings us near.

“*Not that we would be unclothed.*”—Our desire is not so much to die; we wait our appointed time. God wills us to remain here, and we have learned to submit thereto, “as it is in heaven.” The duties we owe to others also cause us to be reconciled; it is more needful for you that we abide in the flesh—for us to *live* is Christ.

“*But clothed upon :*” here is our desire: &c.

“*That mortality might be swallowed up of life.*” Oh! this longing after immortality.

III. More particularly point out the characters to whom this prospect is laid open:—in this chapter.

They are thus distinguished: “Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also *hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.*” Abba-Father—the earnest of our inheritance: the Spirit itself bears witness.

“We walk by faith, not by sight;” we have not seen, yet have believed. See the examples, Hebrews, xi.

“We are confident”—a full certainty “that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord: wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him;” not idle—whether present or absent—to be accepted of him! here is our aim—the applause of man is pleasing, but then our work is with the Lord! our eye is on him! *his* opinion is the final decision on our case! Shall not *I* labour for this? indifferent to the frown or flattery of men; “For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

Application. Lay hold on the 10th verse to apply to the sinner, and the 11th and 15th verses to apply to Christians. Hold on a little longer. * * *

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SERMON XXI.

THE DUTIES OF THE DAY PERFORMED IN THE DAY.

PREACHED IN BEHALF OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

John, ix., 4.—I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work.

THE history of the life of our blessed Lord and Saviour is highly interesting in all its parts and happy in all its connexions. He never for a moment lost sight of his one great

business in the world ; it lay near his heart, and out of the heart's abundant fulness his mouth always spake.

At a period of life when others are slumbering over the fancies of childhood we find him in the Temple amid Jewish doctors ; and when his anxious mother chidingly reproved him on account of the anxiety he had caused her, what was his reply ? “ Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ? ”

While urging on his rapid career, and fully engaged in the character of a prophet sent from God, in which he intimately blended the display of the Divine benevolence, his lips again and again echo the music of his heart : “ I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day ; the night cometh, when no man can work.” In short, as long as he was in the world he was the light of the world : his business must be done while it was *day*—his night of death came, wherein he could no longer work ; the Sun of Righteousness was eclipsed ; creation participated in the shade—was enveloped in darkness and shrouded in her sablest hue ; but the eclipse was of short duration—while angelic hosts seized an interval to retune their harps for higher strains—that they might sing “ to him who was dead and is alive ; ” who rose with healing under his wings, and has finally taken his seat on his mediatorial throne !

But are *we* therefore not partakers of his light ? Yes ; for though the material sun may withdraw himself from our bodily eyes, yet we walk in the reflection of his rays even after his body is concealed from observation ; so, though the Sun of Righteousness, after having displayed his glory on our earth a few years, took his rapid flight to the regions of eternal day, yet he has left him that refulgence that he that keepeth his words shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life ! The influences of his Spirit, which he has *shed* on us abundantly, shall enlighten and enliven all who truly call him Lord, till we are lost in the full splendours of him “ whom, having not seen, we love ; and in whom, though now we see him not, yet, believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory ! ”

Having thus glanced at Christ's conduct generally, look we at our own. The great design of the Gospel of Christ was to raise man to a conformity with him here, that he might share the glories of that conformity hereafter. Did it behoove Jesus to fulfil all righteousness? It was that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us likewise. Was Jesus led by the Spirit? We are to be conformed by being led by the same Spirit of God. Is it said of Jesus that in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily? It is said of us, the Spirit of God dwells in you, for ye are the temples of God! Was Jesus demonstrated the Son of God with power by the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead? So far does our conformity extend, that we bear the same title of sons of God, and our mortal bodies shall be quickened by the same spirit of holiness dwelling in us; we shall be raised by the same power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: being like him in death—for our bodies die—we shall be like him in the resurrection; and, finally, we shall be conformed to him in glory! But the apostle thus states the consummation of this last conformity: "If so be that we suffer with him!" this is the climax! Hence Paul prayed to be a partner in the fellowship of his sufferings, and hence also the common phrase among the Christians of the first age, "If we *suffer* with him we shall also *reign* with him."

But though this was the completion of the conformity in that day, when they literally "died daily," and the strongest conformity they could manifest to Christ, yet no such necessity is imposed upon us; the power of truth has subdued all legal opposition, and all that attaches itself to us by an ungodly world is "*reproach*." A lazy profession, therefore, of readiness to *suffer* for Christ and his cause will not be accepted by him whose servants we are; there is a *doing* as well as *suffering*, and the touchstone of the Gospel is, "If ye love me, *keep my commandments*." And thus shall the

final consummation song be sung by winged seraphs when admitting us into the portals of light through the pearly gates into the city: "Blessed are they that do his commandments."

Such being the requisitions of the Gospel law of Christ, and such its final reward, the words in our text apply to *all* who tread in his steps, though primarily belonging to Christ's own work. Thus St. Paul applies their meaning to all ranks of Christians: "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith;" let us not be weary in well doing: to himself, I *labour*—not suffer—according to his Spirit working in me, &c.

Various were the works which Jesus had to perform:

1. As a prophet: "As the Father gave me commandment, so I speak."

2. As a sacrifice: "Lo, I come to do thy will."

But his works of mercy, his Godlike acts, were so nearly allied to his nature—a nature which melted at human woe—that they mingle with his other characteristics, and shed a radiance on them which dazzles the mortal eye, showing a rich vein which runs through all his soul, glittering even through the human mould. These are the works particularly alluded to in our text—works of mercy!

The works of the Christian bear a close affinity with these, for the fruits of the Spirit are always the same; as is the Lord, so is the servant, even in this respect. When Christ has revealed himself as a prophet to the sincere soul, who has submitted to be thus taught of God, the question of that soul is, "What shall I do that I may work the works of God?" This is the work of God—the work which he requires of *you*—that ye *believe* on God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. When his spiritual life begins, and his suffering scenes begin with it from the world, the flesh, or the devil, how then runs the promise? "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." This is the work which he requires of you, to hold fast your confidence. But shall these two constitute the character of a Christian? Shall this faith in Jesus, this first work of God, and this final perseverance in the profession of our faith, be accepted, unaccompanied by fruits? No; it is impossible. Faith which unites to Christ draws from its union with him all those graces which

shall fill its possessor with every fruit, even to the abounding in every good work. Faith is the root from which all good works must grow; and in the same proportion as these are not produced, in the same proportion will the plant wither and die away; nay, become *twice dead*, plucked up by the roots. Faith is not a principle which only unites to Christ, and brings forth fruit *to itself*, as the Ephesians of old, but fruit *to others*: “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth *much fruit* :” “Let your light so shine *before men* that they may see your *good works*, and *glorify* your Father”(as if by sufferings Christ was glorified, and by our good works the Father is glorified); and as this conformity to Jesus, when derived from this principle, *faith working by love*, assimilates us most to God, it is the *final work* which God requires, and that by which he will judge us in righteousness: “For if we say we love God, and love not (by actions) our brother, we are liars.” (See Matt., xxv.)

Thus does God require various work from us, according to our capacity to produce it, that we may “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling;” requiring faith in the sinner as the ground of his justification in the day of grace, and works, when time is afforded to produce them, in the believer springing from that faith. God himself being the moving spring, he works in us, first the will, and then the power, to do of his own good pleasure. Thus is salvation finally of grace operating in man unto all riches of goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering. Thus God gets all the glory, while man gets all the reward. “Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” I have been the more express here, because I do not mean to say much on the *doctrine* of the text in the remainder of my discourse.

I. Speak of some of those works peculiar to Christianity.

Christianity, even considered in its tendency to alleviate the natural calamities and promote the moral improvement of mankind, is evidently of God. In the experiment which once God himself permitted to be made by a people who were the centre of civilization and the focus of all human attainments, what do we find to have been accomplished by

them to better either of those states? Nothing. "Man by wisdom knew not God:" none of their philosophers could by searching find him out; and as they could not find out the *fountain* of all good, it is clear they could not draw from it any of the waters of life to sooth natural affliction or to heal moral disease. The great source of all virtue is the moral character of the Deity, and its only foundation is his will made known by revelation, and his image impressed on the heart. The ideas we form of God are our standard of moral excellence: as are the gods, such will be the worshippers. And what was the character of the Pagan deities? Instructed by the fables of their metamorphoses and sanctioned by their examples, their unhappy votaries lost all traces of goodness. * * * * *

In the woful description given of them in the first chapter of Romans, in which the apostles lead us by the hand, step by step, into the horrors of that cavern whose bottom was level with the mouth of hell, he asserts that the first step into it was made from the views they had of Deity—they had changed the truth of God into a lie, and this, he says, was "*because* that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful:" it was thus that they "became vain in their reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened." It was thus that, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools: and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." And what were the consequences? As to *moral* disease, we find the very ideas *horrid*, and we cannot stand upon the mouth of this spiritual crater longer than a moment to look into the deep damning depravity; human reason recoils, the heart sickens at the sight, and the vapours arising from this lava of spiritual corruption oblige us to withdraw: "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful."

As to *natural* infirmity, it was also forgotten. While they gloried in their attainments, and looked down on all the world, no Godlike institutions were formed to receive those whose calamities should have rendered them the pity of mankind. While temple after temple was upreared for the worship of fictitious deities, those beings who were made in the likeness of the true Deity were passed unheeded by. * * The humane, simple, unostentatious virtues, so conducive to the happiness of social life, were utterly disregarded; weakness had no asylum, poverty no friend; what are called the charities of life were unknown! Ignorant of the true nature of the Deity, they saw nothing in him but vengeful ire, to appease which, even by the *enlightened* Romans, human sacrifices were not unfrequently made! Being given over to an undiscerning mind, they could not discover the lustre of mercy in the diadem of the Deity. Hence Paul says they themselves were unmerciful; nay, they had not *natural affection!*

After the example of this great people, I need not go farther to prove the state of man by nature left to the workings of his own corruptions. But behold the revelation of God! How is He made known? Is it as a Being fearful to look upon, upon whose shrine humanity is to be sacrificed and hecatombs of groaning victims immolated? No! this was heathen wisdom—wisdom from beneath—earthly, sensual, devilish. The very first step in the faith of the Gospel requires that we believe that God is a “*rewarder* of them that diligently seek him.” Thus the wisdom from above is merciful; and, from this knowledge of the character of the Deity, she requires from the worshippers of such a Deity effects corresponding with such a revelation: on one side of the flag of triumph reared on the Capitol we read, “God is rich in mercy to all them that call upon him;” on the reverse we read, “Blessed are the merciful.”

Our own favoured islands have done more for the amelioration of human misery than any nation in the universe. This favoured city is the astonishment of every stranger! Let him walk where he will; let him ascend the summit of observation, and he sees edifices which, by their appearance,

lead his mind to inquiry, and fill it with astonishment when he finds them receptacles of disease, pain, wretchedness, and want. * * But as the Gospel of Christ is one which must change the *heart*, subdue our nature, and plant the seed of true morality—"the love of God in Christ"—so our institutions for the promotion of this and the remedying of *moral* disease leave the former "no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth." In the same proportion as the value of the soul exceeds that of the body, in the same should our exertions for the salvation of the one exceed those for the salvation of the other.

Of late this truth has become practical; institutions have been formed which confine not their influences within any walls, however spacious. Like Him who does not confine his special or essential presence to temples made with hands, so these scatter their light over all the face of creation. The objects of beneficence are not brought within any concentrated pale, but they are sought out far and wide, in every land of darkness or house of wo, and before they can express their wants they find themselves possessed of their supplies.

Among these institutions we class the *Bible Society*. Through the wide field of the universe the Gospel is now working its way! and, under God, it is by the instrumentality of those who imbibe its spirit and feel its power; those who are the true patriots of mankind—scattering around the seeds of religious knowledge; those who are the genuine philanthropists, who dispel the mists of superstition, and say to the nations, "Behold your God!" those who, by circulating Bibles in the different languages of mankind, annul the curse of Babel and hold communion with all nations of the earth on a subject which involves their destinies, the immortal destinies of the whole human race. This is the cause of God! It will prevail!

Other of these institutions are *Missionary Societies*, the handmaids of the Bible—it was not good that she should be alone; a help-meet was provided. God has ever raised up men willing to die in the harness while drawing along the ark of our God, and among the distinguished the name of

Coke will stand high enrolled! Possessed of a body naturally weak—for it was born to ease, yet trained to hardship in the school of Christ—nineteen times he crossed the great Atlantic; as no dangers could intimidate him, so no obstacles could damp the ardour of his soul: he was the slave of Jesus! But, alas! he is not; for God took him. He fell a victim to his zeal, and sunk into the ocean's bed. The body of this Moses has indeed been hidden from us; but we sorrow not as those without hope; "his frame unwasted by disease, his features not distorted by pain," show the hand of mercy in the dispensation; the silver cord was gently untied, and the spirit dismissed, while the body was committed to the watery grave in its accustomed bloom—fair presage of its beauteous resurrection! He shall not be forgotten, for on that day when God shall count his jewels, *Coke* shall be gathered from the ocean's bed, a diamond of the purest water.*

The institution of *Sunday-schools* is the completion of a Godlike trinity, a three in one, which leads up to the great THREE-ONE-JEHOVAH GOD. Though I name this institution last, it is not of inferior importance to either of the two preceding; I only class it in this order that I may dwell on it the more. The former relate generally to the dispersion of the truth of God to foreign lands; this is a native crop; while the former, in a certain sense, drain our coffers, this replenishes them and provides for the continuance of the others to another generation. * * * *

In whatever point of view *Sunday-schools* are considered, they are of incalculable importance. It may be laid down * * * Nay, the politician, the lover of his country, cannot but be assured that, so far as its influence extends, the best interests of mankind must be promoted. But what are the benefits accruing to the individual? It is an institution which makes not human learning the acmé of its instructions, but that learning which makes wise unto salvation. It combines genius with piety, &c. And thus the *eternal*

* He died in 1814 while on his way to Ceylon at the head of a missionary band.
—Ed.

concerns of man, his best interests, are allied to the temporal advantages it holds forth.

II. The duty imposed on us, urged by the example of Christ.

“I must work the work of him that sent me, *while* it is day.” God has so ordered the very constitution of our being that it necessarily requires this. There is only one Being, who lives for himself, whose own glory is the ultimate object which, from its essential nature, he must invariably pursue. He is independent. The annihilation of all creation would not diminish his felicity, nor does their existence yield it any addition. He is glory. * * *

But obligation and mutual dependance are the conditions on which we receive our being. The same law is in nature—all hang on each other, though the great link is attached to the Eternal Throne. The sun shines not for himself. * * * So in the *moral* world. Angels are ministering spirits. No man liveth to himself. Some men are suns, others but twinkling stars, but all are to shine, and, as far as we possess a capacity to bless, we are to be a blessing. This is the law of our being; and yet, though it is the law of our being, God has even promised a recompense to its performance. In relieving the wants of others he could do without our aid; he could feed his prophet on a barren rock; he could put his spirit into all his creatures, and make them all Samuels; but where would be the reward to the *steward*? He has employed stewards, to the faithful performance of whose duties he has *connected* a reward. Yet this reward is not of debt, but of grace; God is debtor to no man; of his *mere grace* he has promised the reward. The *power* to do good and the *will* are both from him. Should, therefore, the pride of man rise within him, on behalf of merit, he hears a voice sounding in his ear, “I *must* do the work of him that sent me—*necessity* is laid upon me—*wo* is me if I do it not.” * * *

Ask our modern apostle, *Coke*. * * * “I *must* therefore do the work of him that sent me.”

I take it for granted that you have all the *power* to bless on this day! I cannot enlarge on the *various* powers; but

you have all at least one talent. Where is the being who has not the widow's mite? But some of you have five, others ten talents. God has distributed in a diversity of ways: he has intrusted some with more than others; prove yourselves not unworthy the confidence of Heaven.

But the *power* to bless does not necessarily imply those qualities which alone can ensure its beneficial operation. Power is often prostituted. To make it an actual blessing there must be connected with it,

1. A vital principle of religion in the heart. All the *blessings* of life are so many poisonous ingredients in our cup until religion purifies them, and destroys those noxious qualities with which depravity has tainted them. * * *

* * * * *

2. A uniform consistency of character. By religion we govern ourselves, but by consistent example we control others. It silences the clamours of the depraved against us, and calls forth all the energies of the virtuous to our support. Thus it spikes the cannon of the enemy while it increases our own resources. Take this away, and all our professions of philanthropy will only bring us into contempt. We shall be found beginning works of mercy to-day, ceasing to-morrow. A man possessing the *power* and the consistency of character, lays down all at the feet of his Master. Does he speak to others? He appears like an angel pleading the cause of Heaven; his credentials, his life, are read of all men. See Job: "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. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor : and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth." Thus *example*, associated with a *power* to bless, is like the sun which makes no noise, yet moves, and everywhere leaves the effect of his beams.

3. A disposition to improve every opportunity of doing good. Many pious and virtuous persons suffer the most favourable seasons to pass by. They relieve the clamorous while they neglect the more important, not considering that only the inferior evils of mankind are loud and complaining, and that the more desperate, though of a moral and spiritual nature, are accompanied with an awful stillness which resembles that which reigns in the habitations of the dead. These should be sought out. In some, they are hindered by a constitutional, *sluggish apathy ; in others, the slaves of a natural timidity ; in some, a latent love of money ; they would gladly retire from the field of benevolence did not a faithful monitor warn them that stewards must be found faithful ; and yet, though they retire not from the field altogether, they manifest, by the paltry trifle they give to God, that, if they love him, they love their mammon better.

Now what remains but *actually* to put forth our benevolent efforts, not on behalf of an *hospital*, but on behalf of an association which removes the film from the intellectual eye ?

Remove the barriers of Sunday-schools. * * * Augean Stables. * * * *

What is the argument to urge to this ?

III. The time of doing this, "*To-day* ;" and the reason of *immediate* attention : "Because the night cometh, wherein no man can work."

No argument is so powerful as that drawn from our weighing time with eternity. It is the best balance for the meting out our actions that heaven could have provided for us. But it is generally the evil of the world that this balance is seldom used in weighing our own individual interests. Occupied with the things that are seen, we put off those which are unseen. Unbelief, which shuts the heart, is at the *core* of all this !

Jesus ever kept up a view of the joy set before him. Paul walked in the same path; he counted not his "life dear unto himself, that he might finish his course with joy." And shall the same argument be lost upon us? Shall we walk and act as if only inhabitants of time? The thought is awful that there is no action of our lives which shall terminate in its consequences with this scene; that every action of man has a reference to eternity! and, as such, will be weighed by God. If I could drop the dimming veil to-night, and let you into the vision of eternity, I would ask the glorified throng in what light they considered the value of the things of time compared with the glories of eternity. And what would be the reply? With one heart and one voice they would exclaim, they are not to be compared! If I should then bring you down from this mount of transfiguration, would you be found delighting in the wedge of gold or preferring the diadem of a Cæsar to that which fadeth not away? No! you would lightly esteem all the treasures of Egypt; you had seen in the light of God, and you found it good, truly good to be there, and there only!

But though I have not such a power, yet I can direct you how to anticipate such an enjoyment. The telescope of faith is given to man, and by it he can pierce into the invisible world! it is evidence of things unseen; you can only see this through this glass darkly, I admit it, but you could not endure a stronger glare. Faith softens the refulgence and makes it discoverable by man; it enables him to see the glory at such a distance that we can look with eagle eye at this dim vision of eternal day! Oh! that we were wise!

Then, before the day of life closes, do the work of God—*now, to-day*; the night of death is coming; the curtain shall soon drop and be gently closed around the last sleep of your human existence, and "there is no device in the grave whither we are hastening; the night cometh, when no man can work." It is all our lot; we cannot hide the mortifying truth; the landscape which now delights us shall soon delight us no more! I have beautified my house, but I know not for whom. I have amassed treasure, but I know not who shall enjoy it;

the bed in which I shall soon repose my wearied body, and enjoy the sleep of nature, shall ere long be chilled with the damps of death. May I therefore ever intertwine the motto to Timothy round my heart: "I must do the work of an evangelist;" and may you grave beneath your escutcheons this night the motto of my text: "I must do the work of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work."

But, besides this consideration, let me add another. There is not only an hereafter state *generally*, but that state is a state of retribution, of reward, and the man who has his eye on this recompense despises all the treasures of Egypt. It is said of Christ, that for the joy set before him he endured the cross: Paul saw the glory which should be revealed in him in such a point of view that he says, "Neither count I *my life* dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." And do not all who tread in their steps have the same feeling? Ask the modern apostle of the Indies what induced him to quit his native shores the nineteenth time, never more to return? What induced him to brave the boisterous ocean and ride o'er the caverns of the deep? The breeze itself will answer; listen to the murmurs of the gentle gale: "I must do the work of him that sent me, while it is day."

I shall only add another consideration, and with it I will close. Look beyond the grave! How shall the saint made ripe here for eternity be attended through the portals of Paradise? Hear what the Spirit saith: "His works do follow him." It is a glorious thought! I use it not to excite your charity; God himself uses it, and he would not offer us any consideration which is not founded on Eternal Truth! "His works do follow him!" and by his works, as the evidence of his faith, he shall be justified or condemned. Will you, then, be satisfied to enter the royal palace of the King of Glory—now your own possession as sons of God—with so meager a train as that which I fear will deck too many who expect to be welcomed there? Or, rather, will you not enter it in such a manner as will not cause you to be

ashamed when presenting the account of your stewardship? "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents; behold, I have gained two other talents."—"Lord, I have had five committed to my care, and behold I have gained other five." Oh! then, scatter your seed with a bountiful hand this evening! You may not here see the full extent of the crop but hereafter, when all shall be separated, the full extent of the fruits of your individual offering will then appear. Scatter the seed abroad; leave the gathering of the fruit to God: if you expect a plentiful harvest, sow plentifully; and you shall not only say, "Lord, here am I and the children thou hast given me," but you will be constrained to inquire, "Who are these others following hard after? and this third band likewise?" "The children which God has graciously given to his servant," is the answer from winged seraphs. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, and God has made thee ruler over many things; thy one talent has produced ten: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Then will you shine as stars, nay, as *suns*, in the firmament of your Father, forever and ever! Amen!

SERMON XXII.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE GOSPEL.

A MISSIONARY SERMON.

Habakkuk, ii., 14.—For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

IF we seek at all times to trace the *Providences* of God, we shall often find that he makes his throne darkness to us; and from the thick darkness we hear a voice saying, "What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." But in tracing the operations of the word of his *grace* and the state of his church we find this clearly made known. * * * The eternal fiat has gone forth: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

- I. Consider the subject matter of this prophecy.
- II. What is said concerning it.
- III. Offer a few remarks to confirm the declaration.

I. Consider the subject matter of this prophecy.

The "*glory of the Lord*" has various meanings. A grand display of this was made when Moses and Aaron and the seventy elders were called up into the mount. There they beheld his glory! It was as a pavement of fire of the colour of a sapphire, and as the heavens for brightness!—

Any particular visible display of his presence was his glory! for God can display himself in no other way than a glorious one. Hence, when in the wilderness he fed them with manna, and appeared in a cloud, this was his glory! Again, when he led them on in their journeyings by the pillar of fire and cloud, he was in the pillar, and it was "the glory of the Lord!" In aftertimes it was applied to the display made of his glory between the wings of the cherubim, and even to the ark of the covenant afterward deposited in the holy place. When this was taken by the Philistines it was a disastrous day; old Eli died; his daughter was brought to a premature birth; and when in the agonies of dissolution, having heard that he was a son, "call his name Ichabod," *the glory of the Lord is departed*.

But the term has also reference to the Gospel, and St. Paul proves that this was eminently the glory of the Lord! There was a glory attending the law, but this was much more glorious.* The law was the ministration of death, the Gospel of life. The law denounces the requirements of God without any hope to the sinner, the Gospel proclaims pardon. The law leaves us in our lost estate, but the Gospel is the word of salvation! It is more glorious than the law in its author, his *person*, and his work.

1. His person was glorious; a better tabernacle than Moses's—made by God himself—human in materials, but Divine in workmanship: even the *humanity* was built by God! A better glory rested on this tabernacle than Moses's; sometimes this glory darted through the veil of his

* See Benson.

flesh, and made his appearance white and glistening. And then they "beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father;" yea, in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

2. In his work. He comes not to condemn, but to save; and herein is God glorified in the salvation of men. * *

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But the Gospel is peculiarly glorious above the law,

1. In its extent. If we look at former times, we might perhaps think that God had selected a few—originally *one* family of man—as his peculiar treasure; but now we find this was only that the coming of the Messiah might be more clearly *marked*. When that purpose was accomplished, and everything predicted concerning him by the prophets fulfilled, then the mystery which had been hidden from ages was made manifest, even that the *Gentiles* should be partakers of the same riches in glory by Christ Jesus. The veil of the Temple was rent from top to bottom, the holiest was laid open, and the cry went forth, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." He broke down the middle wall of partition between us, even to the foundation; he *razed* it up as Jerusalem was razed, and left not one stone upon another; he made a highway for all the kindreds of the earth: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

2. It represents the Divine attributes more gloriously than the law. There was indeed a great glory on the mountain when God made known his law. The mountain shook! the people trembled! God was terrible in his *majesty*! The glory of his *justice* was great when the earth swallowed up Korah and his rebellious company. His hatred to sin was conspicuous in many such instances. But neither in the casting down of angels nor destruction of the world would his glory have been so marked as in the death of his own Son! In that there is the richest display both of *grace* and *justice*!

"Here the whole Deity is known,
Nor dares a creature guess
Which of the glories brightest shone,
The justice or the grace."

From Calvary a greater glory beams forth than from Sinai; his justice is attempered with mercy, and we can approach the foot of the cross with Mary and John without fearing the consuming fire; nay, the nearer we arrive at the subject of this glory, the milder is its influence! here God's glory is concentrated as in a focus.*

3. It is more glorious than the law as life and immortality are more clearly revealed. * * * Jesus has drawn the veil aside: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." True, he laid down his life! But he took it up again! Man may lay his life down, and though he cannot revive himself, yet Jesus has assured him that he shall be raised again at the last day!

"*The knowledge,*" &c. This word has also various meanings. Sometimes it means *discrimination*: "*I know my sheep, and am known of mine.*" *Publication*: "*I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*" When applied by a believer, it is *full assurance*: "*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.*" Now the knowledge in our text implies, 1. Clearness; 2. Impression; 3. Performance; and, 4. Universal extent.

1. *Clearness*. The glory of the Lord, as revealed in the Gospel, shall be *clearly seen*: it shall be so plain "that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." There is no veil upon it as on the face of Moses, but "with open face we behold the glory of the Lord!" True, there are some facts in it which are mysterious, and these we are required to give credence to, as on the authority of God. Such is the doctrine of three persons in the Divine unity. We need not understand the mystery, but we must believe it even as we believe the sea is deep, though we cannot fathom it; that the heavens are high, though we

* See Styles.

cannot scale them; that eternity is long, though we have no conception of it. But every truth *necessary* for man to know is *clearly* revealed. (Put a number of pointed questions as to my relation to God, to Christ, to time, to eternity, to the judgment, &c.) Thus on the Gospel as our foundation we stand between both worlds, and call to you, ye sons of men; we tell you there is a heaven, a hell, a judgment, and that all this is *settled*. We can assure all this with *certainty*; for it is *clearly* revealed.

2. *Impression*. All the theoretical displays of the Gospel are of no avail without the impression of its truth. The design of the Gospel is to change him who heartily believes it into its own nature. It is the glory of God, and it changes the soul from glory to glory, and makes it partaker of the Divine nature. It operates upon the *heart*. The glory of the Lord is removed from temples made with hands, and dwells in our hearts! We have the enjoyment of *present* glory; the truth is received and *felt*, and makes free! "Christ in us! the hope of *future* glory."

3. *Performance*. But the tendency of all this is not to make Antinomians. Believe and *obey* the Gospel. The sinner *believes*; the believer *works*; he gives up every member to be an instrument of righteousness unto God, and does the work of him that sent him! Indeed, like Philip, we shall say to others, "Come and see;" we shall labour to bring many sons to glory.

4. But this leads us to the universal tendency of this knowledge. Like leaven, it will work its way; the time will come when thou wilt not "say unto thy neighbour, go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee."—But this is anticipating. We now consider,

II. What is said concerning this glory.

There is an ellipsis here; the margin of some Bibles reads "the *channels* of the sea."

1. *Clearness*. Now you know these channels are very deep: so is Divine science—not superficial: its doctrines are deep, and you must sound a long time to fathom them; and often cry, "Oh! the depth."

2. *Experience*. But the waters do touch every surface

of land; they wash every shore; are felt by every land! The glory of God shall be felt by every people; it shall touch them, shall come into contact with them.

3. Universal. But the channels are effectually covered; so shall the world be filled! It shall not distil, as on the camp of Israel, in tender dew; nor rain, though the drops be like a thunder shower; but it shall be poured forth! The wilderness shall become a pool of water, and the desert be filled with springs; it shall not be to the ankles, nor joints, nor loins, but shall *cover* the earth as the waters cover the great deep, and you may plunge in this godhead's deepest sea, &c. Oh! what a time when the glory of the Lord shall be in all lands! Millennium! In every clime, nation, tribe, family, house, *heart!* Lord, hasten it! "The Lord's mountain shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it."

III. It were sufficient for us that the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. His word "has gone forth, and shall not return to him until it has accomplished that whereunto he sent it." But we may offer a few remarks in support of the prophet's declaration.

1. God's covenant with Abraham! This has not yet been accomplished: "*All the families of the earth* were to be blessed in him." We know that the Jews had contracted views of the earth, and they thought that their own land, with the immediately adjacent countries, comprised the whole of it. But God had no such limited idea; he saw the end from the beginning; his broad eye extended from shore to shore; now this covenant *must* be fulfilled; it was a covenant of *salt*, and cannot be broken.

2. It was renewed to Isaac, Jacob, &c., but especially to Jesus Christ. He, as the Messiah, asked the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, and they were given to him: yea, and he is able to save to the *uttermost!* The heathen are now his; virtually by his blood, effectually by his Spirit. God will never break his engagements with Jesus.

3. It was the burden of all the prophecies; labouring under the inspiration of God's Spirit, they declare, to a man,

the universal spread of the Gospel. Read Isaiah: "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory."—See Joel on the last days.

4. But see the commission of the apostles: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Wherever you can find a son of Adam, preach the Gospel to him—to every creature. Do not confine yourself to Jerusalem. "I have other sheep that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." Do not sit down; be itinerants.—Blessed itinerancy! Primitive preaching!

5. But we may refer the accomplishment of this to the promised agency of the Holy Ghost. God's power has undertaken to accomplish it, and he will not fail. He undertook a greater work than this, even that mighty *cause* of which this is but the effect. Christ crucified was the wisdom of God; it required infinite wisdom to accomplish redemption; and now that it is accomplished, Divine power is no longer under restraint; it has rushed forth to save the world!

Finally: we argue it from the effects which have been produced. You may say, the prophets are dead, and the apostles being dead, the commission has ceased. No; "I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Though they are dead, the ministry is not dead; there is yet a living ministry—there always has been one. See the effects it produced in the first ages, when thousands were pricked to the heart. True, it was nearly extinct in the dark ages of Popery; the holy fire was as a spark buried in the ashes; but it was alive! It was revived at the Reformation—Luther abroad, Wickliffe at home; and, in these later days, Wesley and Whitfield; and now behold what has been accomplished! How often have *we* seen the Spirit poured forth in this section and in the other; and what are all these but the earnest of that universal outpouring which the prophets foretell? See how great a flame aspires! Now, when we look at these six things, who

can doubt for a moment that God will accomplish the prophecy? he is able, he is willing, doubt no more.

Application.

1. "What have you to do with all this?" Why, you are interested in it individually. I ask you one question, and the answer will solve both. Why are you so zealous in inviting your neighbours to the ordinances, in contributing to Bible Societies and Sunday-schools? why so transported with missionary intelligence? You are individually interested in it! Why have you never grown weary in well-doing? for the same reason: *you* share in the glory!

2. See what God expects from us; that we lay our shoulders to the work; he works by means—*increase your gifts.* Well, says one, I will distribute more tracts this year than ever I have done before. I will double my subscription to the Bible Society; I will pray more than ever I have done; I will instruct my children more than ever in the fear of the Lord; and as to the perishing heathen, and the missionaries, I will give—what will you give? you pause and ask me, "What shall I give?" I tell you the rule of giving which the Almighty has; he gives according to *our need*, and the *riches of his glory.* Now, "be ye followers of God as dear children." But while I speak the ardour is restrained; I feel you are warm in the work; I have felt the effect of your warmth. My tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth. Now bestow, &c., &c.

SERMON XXIII.

ISAIAH'S VISION.

Isaiah, vi., 1-8.—In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

Then said I, Wo is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips: and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

“No man hath seen God at any time; he is the King eternal, immortal, and invisible;” yet he has made manifestations of his being and attributes to our senses and understandings. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth forth his handiwork.” They declare his daily Providence in governing the world: “Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.”

But from the Scriptures we know that in the upper world there are manifestations far more glorious—a *visible* and *sensible* presence of the glory of God in heaven! The light inaccessible in which he dwells, &c.—this was in part the glory which Jesus had, and of which he emptied himself, and into which he entered again. That glory is the fountain of light! the place of heavenly rest. Saints and angels are there—about it they ever dwell, and so “are ever with the Lord!” and engaged in the services attributed to the seraphim in the words of the text.

The tabernacle and the temple were types or patterns of the heavenly world. They “serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of

God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." But why that strange fact that God should dwell with man upon the earth? visible in an earthly house? The reason was, that heaven set up its pattern on earth to teach what the God of heaven is, how God is to be approached, and what man should be in his presence.

Hence, when Isaiah was appointed anew to his office, scenes of majesty and glory were placed before him!—The scene of the text is not laid in the temple, though a temple scene. A place larger and more spacious was painted on his imagination. The throne in *this* is *high and lifted up*; the train fills *every part*; the cherubim here start into life; they are no more silently gazing on the great revelation of God—all life, all ardour, all love!

At the discovery of this, and specially at the declaration of God's holiness, Isaiah cries, "Wo is me"—he is abased!—but a seraph touches his lips, and he is purified; human lips are then allowed to join with angelic, and the purified prophet is put among the servants of God!

But what does this subject teach *us*? To join the seraphim in our worship; to consider the character of Him to whom we draw near; not to come and gaze upon a creature of our imagination, but to approach with reverence and Godly fear. (See the text.) "Draw near and see this great sight — Put off thy shoes, for the place is holy."

I. The first view of the Divine glory in the text is that of rule and dominion: "A throne, high and lifted up"—the Lord is King—this is the first character under which to approach whenever we engage in worship.

Mark the *fact* and the *circumstances*.

First. The *fact*. Sits on his throne, not like heathen gods, shut up as though he saw not—he always rules in the universe he has made. Natural things under natural law, moral under moral.

In the *material* world upholdeth all things by the word of his power, and ruleth even over his enemies; calleth the stars by name, regulates the seasons, feeds all, shuts up the sea, worketh all and in all.

Moral beings under moral law—made and governs us—directs what to do and shun—holds accountable for obedience or disobedience—his object is to bless, but, if disobedient, as a sovereign he *must* punish; and not only individuals, but *nations* also, raising one and putting down another.

Remember, then, everything is *under law*: he must be obeyed; the happiness of the universe consists in subjection to his will.

Secondly. The *circumstances* of this fact—not only on a throne, but,

1. *Sitting*—maintaining his attitude of majesty, while every being bows in lowly reverence or falls prostrate. It also represents security and repose. He is the same, though all things change; his kingdom endureth forever. Like a rock in the ocean, ripples of individuals or billows of nations move not him. It marks the perfect security of his government amid all opposition: “The Lord reigneth”—“Why do the heathen rage?”—vain is it to take counsel together against him.

2. It is *high and lifted up*, exalted above all power and authority in earth or heaven—all bow—principalities and powers.

3. *The place of this throne*. Not amid the withered scenes of Paradise, blasted by the curse; not on the rock of Oreb, amid lightnings and thunderings; not on the sinless ruins of a smoking world, when resurrection, &c.—but it is seen in his *temple*, in the house of grace and mercy, in connexion with an altar of sacrifice and sprinkled blood—’tis so now here—let us draw near this throne of grace, &c.

II. The second view of the majesty and glory of God is, that in his nature and perfection he is incomprehensible. This is shown in a striking manner, and intended to repress the pride of man. “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” His train *filled* the temple. But is there nothing in this temple but glory? Read on—it is also with smoke: he mingled these in the pillar, &c.—in the Temple of Solomon. What means this?—we cannot by searching find out God—that mystery and darkness is enveloped in all! “Verily, thou

art a God that hidest thyself." Witness Moses's petition. "Show me thy glory;" did he behold it all? "No man can see me, and live." He saw the last evening ray—the tempered ray of glory, but not his *face*! Ask the prophets in succession, and you find them searching and inquiring still what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Ask *Paul*, that wondrous man! "Now we see through a glass darkly." After an immense reach into the Divine design he stops short: "Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Go to the seraphim; even they, long as they have continued searching!—in vain! if so, why gaze they still? Why veil their faces? There is a majesty overpowering them! * * * *

What learn we from this? What the lesson? Be humble and be wise! no other way to know him!—do not try at the bar of human speculation. Know God only as he has revealed himself; receive his testimony:

"Dark with excessive bright his skirts appear;
So that exalted seraphims approach not, till,
With outstretched wings, they cover both their eyes."

III. The third view of the Divine Majesty is *holiness*! "Above the throne the seraphim."—The holiness of God is a perfection most eminent; it is specially celebrated by angels, and full of instruction to mortals.

How conceive we of the Divine Holiness? .

1. Represented under his expressive name, "Holy One of Israel;" *thrice holy*—the *triume* God—all equally holy. No imagination—for read on—"Whom shall I send," &c., was heard out of the throne.—We are informed, "He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity."

2. By his *acts* as well as *titles*. Look at *creation*; everything holy is Godlike. When he made us, he *fitted* us for holiness. Look at his *law*: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Look at the *Gospel*: its author "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." The Gospel stamps its character of holiness

clear as the law by writing, "Without *holiness* no man shall see the Lord." Look at the *judgments* of God as manifestations of his holiness. His anger against sin burns to the lowest hell. * * * Look, again, at the *delight* he has in the holy man; so as to confer eternal life on all such. Still a resplendent glory beyond all this! a depth beyond fathom; a brightness on which we cannot gaze. He charges his angels with folly: how much more those that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth! O! recollect that God is holy above all our views; hates its opposite—even the heavens are not pure.

IV. The fourth view is that of a penitent, abased man sinking before this overpowering manifestation. "One cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried." Everything on earth at least should tremble.—"Wo is me!" I am dumb! "I had *heard* of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." I am dumb as a criminal—like the man without the wedding garment—speechless.

Behold, then, the sentiments which become *us*: we are unclean! Need I remind you of the circumstances which prove this? the sins of your *thoughts, imaginations, tempers!*—pride, anger, malice, uncharitableness! living in utter neglect of God; insensible of the love of Christ your Saviour; resisting the Holy Ghost! religious services barren, trifling, formal; and, among the greatest, the sins of the sanctuary! through life an innumerable multitude! We are capable of sinning or doing good every moment; every thought has the assent of the will—the sins of a *day* cannot be numbered—more than the hairs!—We can only remember a few prominent ones when we confess—but God registers them all! What a load of guilt, then, on every man! We would fain make his law less holy!—this is the case of all.

What then? need I tell you? "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book

of the law, to do them." The Gospel is against you as well as the law. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "Without are the dogs:" *without*—disowned of God—not within the gates of glory. God is against you also; sinners cannot dwell in his sight. He is here! and he joins himself with all who resemble him, and are sprinkled by his blood, but he has passed *you* by. You are unholy, and you know it not.

Wo! wo! I trust you are now saying, "Behold, I am vile! I feel it is just I must perish. I am not barely convinced of the *fact* of being a sinner, but I am *dumb*! I feel it is *right* I should perish; right that a holy God should reject unholy man. I have trampled under foot the blood of Jesus, and deserve *hell fire*!" Is this hard? If you think so, you are not in the prophet's state; and you will carry the wo away with you. Yet you need not; but, unless you give up this excusing—palliating, this wo will follow you: it will go with you to your business, your sickness, your resurrection—when you awake to *see* this holy God!

V. The fifth view we have is that of this humble, silenced man obtaining mercy! "Lo! one of the seraphim flew unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips: and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." We have, then, the fact before us that a guilty man may be forgiven, purged, approach God, and join the seraphim.

It is not peculiar to the prophet; pardon is offered to *us*—but, if we only knew the *fact* without the *method*, it would be useless. We know the meaning of these symbols. The prophet saw an altar in the throne. What means this but that a sacrifice was there, something to interpose?—and there was fire; not common, but the holy fire from heaven. We know the altar; the sacrifice is Jesus; the purifying fire is the baptismal fire of the Holy Spirit which fell at Pentecost.

Now God wills not that we should take this wo away * * * if deeply humbled.—O thou abased one, what affrights thee? Is it the throne, the fiery train, the seraphs'

cry? But there is another object in the temple—look—turn your eye to the altar on Calvary! “My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” Why is this? He bore *thy* sins in his own body on the tree. Nor is the Spirit reluctant to bless; he is the fruit of the Saviour’s passion. If you cast your whole self on that passion, that Spirit shall be sent. God offers you now this purifying grace. Ask—wait on God in all the earnestness of believing prayer.

Then God shall put you among his servants—the messengers of God—thus we may go with seraphs, and gaze on the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But remember, like the cherubim, we *adore* as well as gaze: pardon gives no lightness nor trifling. Nothing excludes boasting and keeps humble like recollecting that we deserved eternal death.

Remember, also, that with *twain* they did *fly*—always on their Master’s service—be on the wing.

Then mark a higher result: changed from glory to glory, and prepared for the temple above! “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell among them, and he will be their God, and they shall be his people.”

SERMON XXIV.

THE MINISTER'S REQUEST.

1 Thessalonians, v., 25.—Brethren, pray for us.

No mark is more distinctive of the new birth than prayer; it is the breath of the soul; God has breathed again the breath of lives, and he is become a *living soul*—Christ dwells in him—he prays without ceasing.

Now, as this is the inspiration of God, it partakes of his own nature; he willeth *all* men to be saved. Prayer assumes this distinctive mark, *our* Father—Father of the spirits of all flesh:

“The arms of love that compass me
Would *all mankind* embrace.”

“O for a trumpet voice
On *all the world* to call.”

“If *all the world* my Jesus knew,
Then *all the world* would love him too.”

“Come, *all the world*, come, *sinner thou*,
All things in Christ are ready now.”

Faith is personal—it is *Abba, my Father*.

In conformity with this view of prayer Paul says, “I will that prayer be made for *all men* ;” after the example of him who is kind to the unthankful. Thus do good to *all men* ; but “*especially* unto them who are of the household of faith.” “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem ; they shall prosper that love thee.” St. Paul was very feelingly alive to the necessity of the prayers of the faithful. Though he could give thanks to the Father who comforted him, yet, amid all this support, he confesses his need of their prayers. If this were *his* feeling, how much more *ours* !

I. Explain the exhortation.

II. Enforce it.

It implies that the church does not in general pray for its ministers. How true is this ! I appeal to your hearts ; is it done in your social circle, at the family altar, &c. ? How often have we been in houses where prayers for *all men* have been made, but none for the minister. You say some do not need it ; some do not deserve it ; you complain that it was a bad sermon.—Did you pray ? O ! let this duty be attended to.

And what will you ask of God for us ? Is it that we may be popular, and be able to please the world ? No ! whatever others do, I would entreat of you to ask *that* of God for which I myself have supplicated his throne with many prayers and tears, night and day.—“And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee ; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast

given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart." *Wisdom* * * * * Pray that your ministers may have this wisdom, this soundness of mind, sound speech, &c.

1. That they may be sound in doctrine. That the Lamb would open the seals of the book, and anoint their eyes with eye-salve, that they may have clear understanding of the mysteries of the Gospel, and be able to bring forth things new and old.—The disciples at Emmaus.—

2. In experience. That in all these doctrines which they impress on you they may be able to say, " *We* are witnesses of these things:" " That which we have seen and heard, and our hands have handled, and our hearts have felt, of the word of life, declare we unto you." It is miserable work to preach without feeling.

3. In practice. That our motto may ever be, " Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ;" that our zeal may be conspicuous; and, if called to suffer, our patience, &c. * * * * *Again*—

1. Pray that no entanglement of the fear of man may cleave to the discourses of your ministers, but that they may speak boldly as they ought to speak; that an effectual door of utterance may be opened, and that, with the meekness of the Lamb of God, they may connect the force of the lion of the tribe of Judah! That their faces may be set as *brass*

against the enemies of the Lord; that it may be said of them, as of their Master, they are no respecters of persons, nor care for the person of any man, &c.

2. That the word of the Lord may run. That sinners may be saved.—This is the end of all our preaching—that the cross may be exalted, and that all men may flock to it.

3. That the crafts of Satan may never so beguile, either through the allurements of the world, or any other means, as to cause a falling away.—That they may attain to the end of their faith, the salvation of their own souls.

“A charge to keep *I* have” as well as *you*; that, after having preached to you, we may not ourselves be castaways.

II. I will not urge the *command*. I will not say it is your *duty*; the love of Christ constraineth us; and we will urge this *love* to constrain you.

1. We are men of like passions with you; ministers are not angels. We are liable to be tempted. Liable? Nay, we have temptations with which perhaps you are never assailed; St. Paul accounted his chiefest trial “the care of all the churches.” Learn what that care is, “that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus;” “Of them whom thou hast given me in charge have I lost none.”—O! the anxiety of a minister of Christ; how jealous lest one spotless garment should become defiled, and unfit for the marriage supper of the Lamb. * * * *Love to us.*

2. Satan will level his artillery chiefly at the standard-bearers; he knows they seldom fall alone.—If he can destroy the leaders, he knows that he can get some of the flock; there are always some lame in the flock, and these, he knows, will be turned out of the way. He knows that, if he can cut the larger branches, the twigs will fall with them. O! then, as you love the brethren, pray for us; for *their* sakes hold us up at a throne of grace, that Satan get not an advantage over us. * * * *Love to others.*

3. But suppose we are unworthy of your prayers, yet for *your own souls' sake* remember us: “When ye enter into a house, say, Peace be to this house.” If we are not worthy, yet *you* shall receive a reward, even the good things implored for us; God will answer them to you one way or other. Abraham prayed for Sodom. * * * * *

* * * * * *Love to yourselves.*

4. But, above all, pray for us as you love the Head of the church. * * * * * *Love to God.*

What is the end we have in view? If we attain the graces mentioned, if the door of utterance be opened—does the matter rest here? Nay; but that the word of the Lord may be glorified, or God glorified in and by his word! He is glorified when all his attributes are set forth as harmonizing in the economy of man's salvation—the everlasting Gospel! He is glorified in the change made in the hearts and lives of multitudes of sinners; “a new song is put into their mouth, *even praise to God.*” He is glorified in saving millions of souls from everlasting burnings; and these ransomed ones shall swell his glories in the world to come.—Pray that our crowns of glory may be worth casting at the feet of Jesus. He is glorified. * * * * *

Application.—*Brethren!* many probably in this congregation will feel no interest in our situation. “What is that to us?” say they. Coming to hear preaching is with them a matter of course; time would otherwise hang heavily. In all the anxieties of the preacher they have no sympathies! If he pipe, they dance not; if he mourn, they weep not.—To whom then shall we turn? “*Brethren,*” pray for us! We cast ourselves at your feet! your servants we are, for Jesus' sake!

But if, after all, no man should stand by us, the Lord will help us himself. *We* shall yet be “unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and also in them that perish. To the one a savour of life unto life, and to the other a savour of death unto death.” God will be glorified by us in one way or other. If we are doomed to say, “All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people,” yet our labour is with the righteous Judge!

But, beloved, we hope better things of you, though we thus speak; I say not these things to condemn you, but, as my beloved brethren, I warn you. I have confidence in you in all things. *We* will remember *you* without ceasing, &c.—*Brethren, pray for us!*

SERMON XXV.

THE DIVINE REQUISITION.

Proverbs, xxiii., 26.—My son, give me thine heart.

By the *heart* is not meant that of flesh and blood, but the immortal and thinking part—seat of the understanding, will, and affections. God claims it—has a right to it, and he *only*—we have a right to love all, but not give the heart to any; he will receive nothing in place of it—despises all.—

Consider God as speaking to each and all.

- I. Explain the text.
- II. Enforce it.

I. Explain.

1. Our text supposes that men do not naturally give their hearts to God. How true! look around, and at ourselves, and say whether it is *even easy*; they give their hearts to everything else.—We scarce wonder at a parent loving an only child, while so many give their hearts to *dogs, wealth, &c.* * * * * *

2. Our text supposes, again, that God will not *force* us to comply with the demand. Though he uses many means—knocks at the door—often *loud*—many years—conviction flashes in so that the sinner cannot but see his sinfulness; yet no irresistible *force* is used. He calls upon us to *present* a sacrifice, *living, holy, acceptable*.—If any have been waiting the day of God's power, take care you do not lose your soul; you should have given it long since; give it *now*; it is not given without an effort, though no effort is effectual without grace. But what is it to give the heart?

Much more than a respectable profession—the foolish virgins do not seem to have known that they *were* fools—no difference apparently—but they took no oil.—Great need of caution in these times not to rest in mere profession. But to give the heart implies,

First. That we heartily renounce *all* that God has forbidden. Many, like Herod, renounce *all* but *one*; perhaps it is a popular sin, common to many of the worshippers; but you *cannot* retain it if you give God the heart. But renounce *heartily*—some renounce for a *season*, and then return—Pharaoh—many alarmed by hell—religion often *begins* here, but dangerous to *rest* here—but the fear subsides, and as the man never, in heart, left Egypt, he is ready to listen to the tempter. * * * He yields to one sin, resolving to do it no more; but he repeats it, and falls back: we must *hate all* sin; if we regard it at any future time the heart is taken back.

Secondly. To give up the heart implies a hearty belief for the fulfilment of all the promises. No promises to unawakened sinners—the *threatenings* all theirs—but, when turned to God, all the great and precious promises—Promises to forgive, cleanse, teach, guide, help—of food, raiment, &c. * * * If we doubt whether he is true in these promises we do not give the heart. If the heart be given without *trimming* it *will* receive *all* his promises.

Thirdly. It implies that we seek and cleave to him constantly as our portion: happy is he who can say, “The Lord is my portion;” let him give or take, only give me himself. A *satisfying* portion—*heirs of God*—more than heaven—“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” A prison is a palace—December as May—storm as calm—affliction as health—death as life—yea, *then* most of all when the world recedes—and I enter immediately to God!

II. What are the motives which should induce us to give God our hearts?

1. It is *just* and *right*—you wish to be thought honest; but, if you have not given your heart to God, I deny your claim to honesty—a superior commits to your trust a great and valuable estate, &c. On what part does God most set his love? Is it on the *earth*? true, he has enriched its bowels and adorned its surface; but this will be burned up. Is it the sun? true, he has clothed with splendour the most glorious work visible; but he will put it out and trample on the

stars—"all souls are mine." What has he *done* for these? What has he *given* for these?—immortal as himself. For *them* "He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," &c. Now he calls for this soul, this heart, this spirit. Will you keep back what he values so much? *He* did not keep back his own *Son*, and will *you* keep back, &c.—"But what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul." * * *

2. Our *interest* requires it. Our souls are diseased, blind, defiled, miserable. God alone can heal, cleanse, and make happy: he only who caused the light to shine can remove our *blindness*; he only takes away the stony heart, the leopard's spots; but he will make us wise and holy, and fill us with his love: none but he can do this. See the immortal mind eager after something—it is happiness; many seek it elsewhere; but give the heart to God, and he will fill it with all his fulness.—Give it to God, and you are at rest.

The keeping of your hearts is important; true, *we* are commanded to keep them; but how so well as by giving them to God? He will be a wall of fire—we have many enemies—but he will keep every moment. "I go to him, and he keeps me," said George Pearson of Macclesfield—"kept by the power of God."—Peter—See Job's case: "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?" but what did Satan say? "I could not get at him; I cannot break through nor get over the hedge: take it away, and then see what I will do."—He not only charges his angels for them, but he himself becomes their guard. * * * *

* * * * *
How kind it is in God to seek our hearts—sinful, ungrateful beings. Does he need us? Is not he blessed though we should be cursed? But he is love, and so much so as now to seek our hearts.

Now what answer will you give my Lord to the text?

1. Oh! say some, I gave it long since. I am only sorry I did not give it before, and sorry I have so often backslidden in heart; but to whom shall I go? * * *
* * * * *

2. Yes, says another, I desire and endeavour to do it; but what a struggle for life! Do not despair; lift it up as thou art able, and “if darkness endure for a night, joy shall come in the morning;” the Lord is nigh thee; he can loosen thy heart. Look up—the day of redemption draweth nigh. Why not now? Say,

“Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here’s my *heart*, O! take and seal it,
Seal it for thy courts above.”

3. Yes, says another—my *heart*? Do you desire that? ask for my money, my tongue, my voice, my feet, my hands, anything and everything but *that*. It is otherwise engaged. My Master has not left a power in my commission to compromise it; he will not take aught else. *Engaged*? “give it *me*,” says God; the gold is his—he is not hungry; he needs not thy tongue nor voice—of these *stones* he could raise, &c.—he needs not thy hands, &c.—but thy *heart*!

4. Yes, says another, by his help I will; it is right. I cannot be safe without, and it is kind he seeks it. But when? to-morrow—to-night is impossible; in a *very* short time I will. I doubt thou wilt perish forever! Why do people perish who hear the Gospel? Is it because they never intended to give their heart to God? no; the reason is, they put it off—sermon after sermon—almost every hearer is more or less awakened, and they see it is right. *Now or never* is one of Baxter’s titles. What probability, in the name of God I ask it, that you will *ever* give if not *now*? Will he be more willing to receive it? Satan more willing to relinquish it? you more inclined, the longer you stay in sin, to part with it? See Felix—he trembles—the preacher’s heart said, “See how God blesses the word;” he makes signs as if going to say, “What is it? what shall I do?” But oh! how was the preacher’s heart grieved at, “Go thy way for this time.” You may die to-night, and sink to rise no more until the resurrection! I see some of you as if about to speak. Is it “Go thy way?” Then I will return to my Lord! But he says again, “Go, and tell them all things are *now* ready.” Will you all with one consent

begin to make excuse? What, not *one!* not one man! woman! child! O! young—turn to-night. * * * See the prodigal! imitate him; “say if thou canst take me into thy family!”—*at all*—O! take me even as a servant. But his language assures thee a higher place: “*My son.*” Now shall angels tune their harps afresh!

O! my Father, I need not fly to thee with the answers of this people; thou searchest their hearts; I now resign my commission into thy hands. Does the word return *void*? Oh! the suspense—the *day* shall declare it. May I be found *faithful* and *innocent*.

SERMON XXVI.

RELIGION FIRST.

Luke, xii., 31.—But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

MEN are of two classes: the *carnal*, these are doomed to death; and the *spiritual*, whose end is life and peace. They are distinguished by the objects at which they aim.

1. The *carnal* rejoice when the world's joys increase; the *spiritual* when the Lord lifts upon them the light of his countenance.

2. The *carnal* set their affections on earthly things; the *spiritual* on things above.

3. The *carnal* are asking continually, “What shall we eat and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?” their exertions are limited to this present life; the *spiritual*, though they neglect not the duties here, are yet *chiefly* concerned with the world to come—they seek *first* the kingdom of God.

I. The intense pursuit here recommended.

II. The encouragement to those who embrace it.

We notice this kingdom in two points of view: *First*, in

the hearts of believers here; and, *secondly*, in perfection hereafter.

1. In the hearts of believers here. A kingdom *among men*—also one *within* us—not attendance on ordinances, but joy in the Holy Ghost.

Man is not naturally the subject of this kingdom, but a stranger, nay, a rebel to it; a *slave* of Satan, not a *subject* of God. Hence Satan is called a strong man armed; nor does the reign of grace come until the stronger man comes—Jesus Christ. God has contrived a plan to recover us from Satan's yoke, and to restore us to the first allegiance. He gave his Son—the cross!—Death!—Jesus Christ accepted the Father's appointment, and executed it. He died the just for the unjust; this crucified Son the Father has highly exalted; having placed him on a mediatorial throne, he commands all submission: "Kiss the Son"—the Gospel proclaims the exaltation. "Blessed are they who trust in him." This proclamation is always accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost *more or less*. Whoever proclaims it has this assurance: "Lo! I am with you always," &c. Thus the Gospel is mighty through God; whoever receives this Gospel record is saved at once from the *guilt* and *power* of sin, and becomes not only an *object* of God's *favour*, but a *subject* of his *authority*; sin, self, and Satan are dethroned, and this new and holy dominion in the heart is the kingdom of God.

Kingdom so called for various reasons: *First*, God holds a kingly residence—his subjects are temples of the Holy Ghost. *Secondly*, A kingly rule is exercised in it—they do his will. *Thirdly*, To such he imparts his kingly bounty and protection: "No weapon that is formed against them shall prosper"—this is the heritage.

2. In perfection hereafter—in the heavenly state—the kingdom of *glory*, of which that of *grace* is preparative. As both are under the same sovereign, they have the same subjects; none will enter the kingdom of *glory* but they of the kingdom of *grace*; *grace* is *glory* in the seed and bud, *glory* is *grace* in perfection: "He that believes *has everlasting life*."

“The men of grace have found
Glory begun below.”

Is the former the *kingdom of God* because he holds his residence here? Much more in the *kingdom of glory*—he fixes his throne there—they see him as he is.—Is the state of believers here termed a kingdom because he exercises his authority over them? Much more in heaven—he reigns over them there forever and ever; his government there is wholly by *himself*—it is most perfect; he is served there day and night. Is their state so called because he gives his kingly bounty? *Much more* in heaven.—This grace, then, is the great object of pursuit as the preparation for glory.

“SEEK it.” This recommendation requires, *First*, A sincere desire after the King of Glory. We believe, on the authority of God’s word, that there is not only another state *generally*, but that it is a state of *retribution*. This produces a desire for participating in the joys hereafter—meanwhile we desire grace as the preparation of glory—desire heaven for its *purity*, not for its *enjoyment* merely. Hence we pant after *purity* here.

Secondly. It requires decided preference—*rather* seek it—prefers grace and glory to the necessaries of life!—*Supremely*—else you will never possess either grace or glory: “Count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.”

Thirdly. It demands active diligence in the use of appointed means. If your desire be sincere, it will stir you up to this. If you desire to be made a subject of that kingdom, you must seek it by *penitence* and *faith*. *Repent*—cherish the conviction which God’s word suggests, and the Spirit of God enforces, that you are rebels! Let this humble you. Seek in earnest prayer the promised coming of Jesus. To this repentance and its fruits add faith in the *Gospel*; receive Christ as able to save; when he comes to the door of your hearts, refuse not by affected humility because you are a sinful man. It is because of this he comes to save you; it is the reason why he comes to you as your deliverer; yea, it is the reason why you should accept him—open to him in simple faith. Cry out, “Come in, my Lord,” and he will.

Fourthly. Having been introduced into this state, are you desirous to be preserved in it to eternal life? Do your duties—attend the ordinances—“Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.” But he who trusts all these to his first faith is blind.

II. The encouragement. *All things* shall be added. This implies, *First*, That the pursuit of the main object shall be successful—and he will add others. Solomon’s case at Gibeah exemplifies this—he asked wisdom—he sought this *supremely*—God gave it him, and with it much more.

Secondly. Other things shall be added—the necessities of human life—food and raiment *sufficient*—but no more is promised. He may give more, and often does, and oftener would, if he saw his people would be faithful. But though it does not promise wealth, it promises what will make happy *without* it; though not all he could *like*, yet he likes all that he has, and this is equal. This feeling is the effect in us when we have received the kingdom of God, because such know that it is from God.

* * * *First.* Our subject addresses itself to the *carnal* and *worldly*. God has often said, “*Seek my face;*” you say, *no*: “What profit shall I have if I pray unto him?”—It reminds you that you cannot have the kingdom of God without seeking—the way to hell is easy—down hill; just follow the stream. But, if you would have grace and glory, go against the stream. You may be honest, but “you must be born again.”

It also reminds you that grace and glory are worth seeking, and not worthy that contempt in which you hold them. (Styles.)

Again, it calls on such to examine what they are seeking instead of this. Compare the two: a little wealth, ease, gratification, fair speeches and looks from men as mortal as yourselves, and this but for a moment!! And is this all for which sinners resolve to forego everlasting happiness? Yes; to their everlasting shame be it said! Dream—cheat—bubble—all they get who miss of heaven!—This is not

all—I am wrong. It may be all they *seek*. As they who seek first the kingdom of God have other things added, so they who seek the world have something added—hell—the flame unquenchable—all this he *adds* to those who *trample* on Christ.—*Eternity!* (Osterwald)—Dives's case shows it is *real*.

Secondly. It addresses also the lukewarm. I would not confound you with the carnal; I will give you your due. Though in a sense you are seeking, yet, as it respects the general habit of the mind, you seek it in the *second* place. You sacrifice religion to the world; this is why you have just so much religion as makes you miserable. You love it in others. Oh! shake off the dust of the earth—awake. The conviction of your judgment is right, but let your *will* choose it. “Lay aside every weight.” Do not say you have not time. All can find time for what they love best—the miser—the sensualist.—If religion were alive in the *heart*, you would find time to keep religious feelings lively in the head. You must find time to die. (Jay.) Can the husband be satisfied with his wife if she only *just* please him? So God—he must have the *first* place.

Thirdly. It addresses itself to tried saints. What says the text to such? Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and he will take care of you.—The best way to live to him is to think most of the other world. Man is an anxious being. He will direct his mind to something. This is no sin; but it is when anxious for this world. Says Jesus, cure this by directing your anxieties to *infinite* objects; seek the kingdom of God; be subjects of his kingdom. If you are, pray that you may be perfected; pray that you may be prepared by holiness, patience, &c., for higher advancements in that kingdom whither you are hastening. Be jealous for the king's honour—anxious to multiply his subjects. Contrive plans to recover the rebels. While anxious about the best things you will forget the paltry ones; and *eternity* will convince you of the justice of your choice. * * *

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SERMON XXVII.

PAUL IN A STRAIT.

THE AUTHOR'S LAST SERMON.

Philippians, i., 23.—I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.

NONE ever expressed more ardour of desire for the tabernacle than David: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God!" "Wo is me that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" And shall Christians, strangers, pilgrims in a wilderness, sigh less after their *home*?—less for that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God?"—weary of dwelling in Meshech?—So Paul—though in a strait between the two, yet, when he consulted his own inclination and interest, it was to die. Let us consider,

I. The object of his wish—death with the happiness following—"to depart and be with Christ."

II. His disposition with regard to it—with vehemence—"Having a desire to depart."

III. The reason of his desire—the great advantage—"far better."

I. The object of his wish, &c. The death of the *believer* is only a *departure* to go and rejoin himself to Christ. Death so considered should not be an object of *fear*, but of "*desire*."

How different the views of men on the subject of death: to the infidel, annihilation; to the man of the world, a cruel separation from all he holds dear; but to the Christian it is only a *departure to be with Christ*.

1. A departure of the soul from the body—thus, death is common to all. O infidel, think not that thou shalt cease to be! it is but a change of country. O men of the world,

ye are chased away by a strong arm ; you do not “ *depart* ;” the messenger *drags* you away ! the term of your tenement is expired. Not so the believer ; he knows that here he has “ *no continuing city*,” but “ that, if the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, he has a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ;” he is therefore content to quit his cottage—he departs with freedom and honour !

2. It is the departure of the man altogether out of the society of the world ; a consigning of the body to dust, and the soul to a new world.

All relations to sublunary things cease, and he will never hold the same connexion with them again. Painful thought to the wicked, whose heart was in the world—instructive to the righteous to sit loosely in affection to it. He is at an *inn*, not at home. Why be embarrassed, then, about the accommodations ? The soldier only pitches his tent ; the sailor merely touches at your coast. So you are as passengers waiting the change of wind.—The end of your voyage is “ *to be with Christ*.”

The Scriptures represent the happiness of the righteous generally, whether before or after the resurrection, by this expression.

But why did Paul employ this phrase in preference to any other ? He was filled *with Christ* ! If he live, it is because Christ lives in him. If he resolve to know anything, it is “ Christ and him crucified.” Christ is life—wisdom—hope. Christ is gain to him, whether living or dying. Christ is his felicity after death. And in every respect he is the source of *our* felicity : “ *We shall dwell with him*.” * * * The kingdom he has opened for us is *his* kingdom ; the glory we are to inherit is *his* glory ; participation of *his* royalty ; the sight of him will be our chief happiness.—*O ! to be with Christ !*

We cannot be with Christ while here ; we must *depart* to be with him. Once the disciples were with him on earth, and earth was a Paradise ! Now it knows him no more. The Father has exalted him above the heavens, to draw our hearts after him. If he had remained always in this

world, who would have wished to depart? But "*he is not here—he is risen,*" and we follow. We know where he is, and the way we know.—But as He did not enter heaven without rending the veil, his flesh, so neither can we. Then more reason shall we have than even his disciples to say, "Lord, it is good to be here!" to dwell forever, not in a tabernacle, but in this holy mountain.

Paul joins without any medium, "*depart*" and "*be with Christ.*"

What numerous errors! Talk no more of the soul's sleep till the resurrection; let us hear no more of a purgatory. As to the first, it is impossible to separate *thought* from the soul. If it cease to think, it ceases *to be*—it will not sleep, therefore. Would any be happy to die, if between death and happiness so long a space? Would Paul not rather have desired to live for the sake of his partial enjoyment of Christ here? Would he then have said "*depart and be with Christ?*" If the soul sleep when we depart, then it cannot be "*better*" than to live; for certainly life, and the present enjoyment of God, and the prospect of service to the church, are better, &c.

The same may be said of purgatory; to be in purgatory cannot be *much* better than being in the church serving God! Besides, this cannot be an object of *desire*, but rather of *fear*. To say Paul and the martyrs are exempted is mere assumption. The apostle connects himself with all believers: "*We* in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, willing rather to depart and be with Christ"—this excludes us from purgatory as well as him.

O! how sweet the doctrine, "*To depart and be with Christ!*"

II. The apostle's disposition with regard to it—with vehemence—"Having a desire to depart!"

How extraordinary a desire! especially when we consider the love of life and dread of death, so natural! How, then, can death be an object of *desire*? and a desire so vehement as the original implies?

1. It is not so much *death* as the advantages we derive,

and which follow after. Death in itself is not desirable. It is against the very first law of our nature. We do not condemn all trembling at the prospect. We would not divest man of his humanity. Enoch's end, &c., was more agreeable; and Paul had this sentiment: "Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon; that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

But as passing through the valley is the ordinary way of going to Christ, there is nothing in our natural aversion which a well-grounded hope in the promises of the Gospel should not overcome. Why not religion do for us what *philosophy* has done for others? or *worldly honour* as the soldier? * * * What a consideration, "to depart and be with Christ."

2. This desire is only found in the true believer—it is *his* Shibboleth, and his only.—We need not exhort the wicked not to fear death—surprising they do not fear it more.—But whether we desire it or not, it does not tarry. It overtakes him who flies as well as him who expects it. Its feet are swifter than the wind, its hands are stronger than iron.—

But what ought this desire to be, and how far should it proceed?

1. It should be purely *passive*, not *active*; it should not stimulate us to lay violent hands on ourselves, but expect with joy and wait with pleasure the time when it shall please God to send for us. We should not be our murderers by refusing the body its proper care and nourishment, or by exposing ourselves to perils to which we are not lawfully called; we should not break down the walls of our prison.

2. This desire should be accompanied with *patience* and *submission*, not *murmuring* nor *repining*. If there is piety in desiring death, there is sometimes more in *suffering life*. This belongs to the afflicted believer. Tarry for the Lord. Job says, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."

3. It should not be *carnal*, but *spiritual*; not stimulated by the miseries of the present life, but by a desire *to be with*

Christ. If a wish to escape the pains and vanities of life, it should be only a *secondary* consideration.

4. This desire may suffer some abatement by the service of the Church requiring you—as a wife ordered to her husband, but is to leave her child behind. She is in a strait.—But take care this is not excessive, or a pretence to cover the excessive love of life. God can supply the Church and our families without *us*.

III. The reason of his desire—the great advantage—“*far better.*”

Beyond comparison more advantageous—the original seems to imply that it is *infinitely better*.—Show this.

1. Life, it is agreed by all, is subject to calamities without number. Now death, to be with Christ, is our jubilee; our time of release and redemption. *Here* “man is full of trouble;” *every one* has as much of the cup as he can well bear.

But *there* all tears will be wiped away—and that by the hand of Christ! No more strifes among brethren; no more sin. *He* will repair our wrongs and recompense our losses. O! when will this deliverance come?

2. Compare the *enjoyments* of this life with the advantages of being with Christ. View life now on its *bright* side. It has advantages: goods, honours, pleasures.—But none are very great nor very certain. None can give solid joy! The soul is capable of three general affections: to *know*, *love*, *feel*. Three sources of actions and pleasures without number. * * * *There* it shall *know* God in a very different manner from now: in the presence of Christ it will always be at the source of truth; enlightened at the fountain of uncreated light by the true light! and capable of considering things in connexion with causes, &c. * * *

What do we *love* here? Many of the objects are causes of pain; we love many things which are bad and imperfect. *There* love will be *free* from obstacles, *pure* from carnal motives, *vast* in proportion to what we know, and know so perfectly.

Here the soul has a number of agreeable *feelings*; but

much more *there!* more agreeable, more lively! less limited! How many new sources of pleasure may not God lay open to us! pleasures of which he himself is the source *Here* they are gross, short, and imperfect—a day with Christ is better than a thousand! the *crumbs* from his table are better than the feasts of the rich and the abundance of the world. And as with *pleasures*, so with *honours*—coheirs with Christ!—So with *society*—*here*, how the company of the wicked counterbalances the pleasures arising from the society of the pious; *there*, glorified saints and Christ Jesus the Lord! Oh! it is “*better to depart and be with Christ!*”

SERMON XXVIII.

THE VALLEY OF DEATH OPENING TO LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.

Psalm xxiii., 4, 5.—Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

I. THE passage of good men to the mansions of light and life lies through the dark valley of the shadow of death.

II. It is God's gracious presence with us, and his powerful protection, that must enable us to go through without fear, nay, with confidence and comfort.

I. The passage of good men, &c.

1. How significantly is death represented as a shady valley. It is in itself the most deplorable temporal calamity that can befall our nature. In Scripture, *affliction* and *misery* are represented as darkness; and because our *dying moments* are *naturally* the most frightful, the greatest of other dangers are often called the *shadow* of death. Thus in Psalms: “Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron.” “He brought

them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bonds asunder." Because of the gloomy darkness in solitary valleys, *overshadowed* by high mountains, this adds a farther emphasis to import the depth and extremity of distress, in which there appears little hope of relief.—Such is death to the *eye of sense*.

Again, it intimates our natural dread of it and aversion to it. What a grim and ghastly aspect has death! We start and shrink when we are called to walk even under his shadow! See his harbingers—racking pains, convulsions, agonies, &c.—and then the invisible world beyond! How often do good men look on the gloomy side of it, for who knows what it is to die?

2. Vindicate the necessity even of good men passing through this valley.

First. It is necessary for the demonstration of God's impartial justice against sin. Death is not the result of our natural constitution, but the punishment of sin. The empire of death, then, is rendered as universal as the empire of sin. Wherever the hateful leprosy has spread, the walls of this clay must be pulled down!

Secondly. This conduct of God is highly conducive to the glory of his infinite wisdom. For this animal life is *now* only suited to this state of probation. The rewards of grace are more than the soul *could* enjoy in this present body; we could not see God and live.—We must have spiritual bodies. * * * *

Again, it is congruous to glorify God by the exercise of our faith in dying as well as in living. We glorify God when we live by faith; and not less by dying in faith, as Job: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

And, farther, it is no impeachment of God's justice and goodness that good men die; for, indeed, from them the sting of death is removed.

3. The Psalmist supposes death to be the passage to a better life. Without this he could not say, "I will fear no evil;" for such it would be if it were the extinction of our being—and not to fear it would be *stu-*

pidity. The gloomy thought, "wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?" would then sink even a saint to despair.

II. Consider the grounds of confidence and comfort suggested.

1. God's gracious presence in a dying moment. And oh! we never need it more!—the *light* of his countenance! The wolves were wont to set upon the sheep in solitary valleys, and then they most needed the shepherd's care and presence.

But what encouragement to trust God then? "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed." "For this God is our God forever and ever. He will be our guide even unto death."

2. God's merciful disposal and conduct of the Christian after death. He sees the shepherd going before, and follows him; he sees the pastoral staff conducting, and though the passage be dark he treads it firmly; he hears the promise, "I know my sheep, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands." He has already passed under his rod, and been numbered among God's chosen, and he knows that he shall be brought to the heavenly fold.

Again. The lively belief of God's presence will carry him through, not only without fear, but with comfort. To such a one, then, there is nothing *terrible* in death.

Fears he the agonies and pains which are its forerunners? Needful support shall be afforded.

Fears he the consequences after death? "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

To such there is a *comfortable prospect*, which relieves his *fears*. His soul must leave the body; but it is to be admitted into a nobler house not made with hands. He must leave friends, but only to exchange them for angels, &c. And as to his body, he knows that Jesus is "the

first-fruits of them that slept ;” his flesh rests in hope, and then transformed !

Application.—See then the excellency of revealed religion in furnishing such solid supports. Socrates ! Cicero ! Seneca ! Contrast these with David, Job, Stephen, Paul—“ I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.” And this is common to all Christians : “ We are confident, I say, and willing rather, to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

What comfort in the prospect of deceased friends and relatives !—Let us learn to die daily ; to familiarize the scene. Let the daily scenes of mortality lecture us. Let the falling leaf and flower remind us death is attacking our outworks, seizing an eye, a hand, a foot.

And let us so live that the God of our life may be our guide in death and our portion forever !

SERMON XXIX.

THE SOWER.

Matthew, xiii., 1-9.—The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside.

And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat ; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow :

And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up.

Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth ; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth :

And when the sun was up, they were scorched ; and because they had no root, they withered away.

And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them.

But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

“ THE same day ”—a Sabbath day—Jesus preached in the morning and wrought two miracles, from which we may conclude it probable that the events narrated in this chapter occurred in the afternoon. It would appear (from ch. xii.,

1) that he had not had time to eat bread.* “He sat by the seaside,” a place of public resort.—Jesus always in the way.

* * * * *

“He went into a ship, and sat;” giving us an example in this also.—No pulpit unseasonable for him—not only do we find him in the Temple and synagogues on the Sabbath, but on mountains, in cities, in private houses; by the wayside, seaside, and well’s side. “He spake many things unto them in parables;” a mode of teaching different from the Sermon on the Mount; not, however, intended to *conceal* truth, but to excite inquiry.

There is no little difficulty in expounding a parable; to attempt it is almost darkening counsel by words—so simple, and yet so sublime. This is the first instance in which your speaker has attempted it, and he approaches it with a trembling hand. But, with the exposition of our Lord to guide us, we cannot greatly err.

“Behold!”—Wake up attention—*you* are concerned—“a sower went forth to sow.”—The heart is the moral soil—though the same *base* in all, it produces different results; yet, believing that God is no respecter of persons, we believe all are *equally* depraved. In some, a happier constitution, or education, or a more direct exposure to the moral sun, or fewer temptations, may cause a difference; and hence many gain greater credit for piety and moral worth than they deserve. But, without attempting to determine the reason in every case—much mystery being involved—the *worst* soil is capable of bringing forth *some* fruit. Where circumstances are dissimilar, the eye of the husbandman may see the man with thirty-fold in an equally favourable light with him who brings forth a hundred-fold in a more genial situation.

The seed is the Word of God; this is necessarily *good*, and the fruit must therefore be good. The husbandman who sows pure seed has not a better right to expect a good

* Example of Jesus for preaching twice a day.—Nicholas White, of England, was accused of heresy because he commended this in Luther. A bishop said he *preached* in the morning and *prated* in the afternoon. It was deemed *puritanical* Thank God, times are changed.

crop in his field than has the spiritual sower; for they both equally depend on the blessing of Him who sendeth down the early and the latter rain, and who alone giveth the increase. Again, like him, the minister knows beforehand the *kind* of fruit to be produced from the character of the seed. If wheat, he expects not barley. If he has sown the threatenings, he knows there will be a moving with fear, such as Noah felt when he prepared the ark. If promises, hope; if eternal glory, holiness; for "He who hath this hope *purifieth* himself, even as he is pure." Again, this seed is incorruptible: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He that receives it "*hath* everlasting life."

The sower is the preacher. Preaching is a *religious ordinance*.—The minister's business is to sow, not to "lord it over God's heritage." He is but a husbandman!—*your servants!*!—He sows beside all waters; "in the morning casts abroad his seed, and in the evening withholdeth not his hand." He is the bearer of the seed-basket; he has nothing but what he has received. O! to sow from one well filled, shaken together, running over! It is hard work to preach without the heavenly seed. Many, for want of this, have filled the basket with chaff; and the people are hungering before him, and with anxious eye desiring to be fed!—fills their belly with husks—and others, for want of seed, have filled their baskets with tares and darnel, and are desolating the garden of the Church with noxious weeds! O! these scatterers of firebrands, arrows, and death!

And yet how often is the faithful pastor after God's own heart seen to go forth weeping, though bearing precious seed! How often to adopt the inscription on Fleteher's tombstone!*

* The portion of the inscription alluded to is the following words:

"While others constrained him to take up
The lamentation of the prophet,
'All the day long have I stretched out my hands
Unto a disobedient and gainsaying people;
Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord,
And my work with my God.'"

How is this ! that with good seed and a faithful sower there is so great a disparity between the seed sown and the produce ? Our parable informs us that it arises from the different states of the hearers. We may divide these into four classes.

I. *Careless hearers.*

“Some seed fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured it.” However, they are “*hearers*”—so far it is good—better than they who never attend God’s house. We do not tell you to stay away ; oh no ! we are sent to *you*, not to the righteous ; we want the *sick* in the hospital. But,

1. They are only *occasional* hearers—not regular in their attendance. Perhaps they are attracted by a new or favourite preacher, or they are in a strange place, and want to see the church as a public edifice ; to “see what manner of stones, and what buildings are there !” or they are at a friend’s house, and they go out of courtesy to him.

2. Again, they are *unprepared* hearers—“by the *wayside*.” Their minds are unploughed thoroughfares ; thoughts pass up and down them all the time in quick succession, and they seldom hear a *word*, though the voice of the preacher still sounds in their ears. If aroused by an *emphasis*, they see not the reason of it ; and if the conclusion of an argument strike them, they cannot judge of its propriety, for they have not followed the train of reasoning. Satan, with his hellish host, hovers up and down like the fowls of the air, and picks up and devours the fallen seed. Thus the mind is the devil’s thoroughfare ; he has ingress, egress, and progress as he pleases ; for whoever else may or may not be at church, Satan is there. When “the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them.”

Luke says, “The devil cometh, and taketh away the word out of their heart, lest they should believe and be saved.” This he does in two ways : First, by diverting their attention—they understand, they consider not ; like “the eyes of the fool, their thoughts are in the ends of the earth :” the least thing diverts their attention as a child from his task—the flitting of a bird—

* * * * *

Secondly, by preventing their remembrance—catching away what was sown *on* their hearts. When they leave the church, all is forgotten, even the text; then they complain that they have bad memories!

* * * Every sermon is the savour of life or death. O hear, that your souls may live! Come prepared, and be regular in your attendance. We will yet pray for you; but “who hath bewitched you?” Do you believe that we are acting a part that we feel not? or that we are *honest* men? If so, are ye *wise* men? Every sermon either softens or hardens. O that you would *consider!* (Newton’s anecdote of the ungodly son.)

II. *Superficial hearers.*

These are much better than the former; they have advanced considerably.

1. They are in general persons of good understandings, they know how to appreciate the preacher’s arrangement. It is pleasing to *us* to address such. To such we have no need to explain at every sentence. We feel that we are understood, and we *go forward boldly*. Meanwhile, their intellect is delighted, they are pleased and charmed with what they hear. Possessing fine sensibilities also, they are easily affected; they weep under the word, and would fain join the daughters of Jerusalem.—But they would feel the same under a play, or at hearing a tale of fiction, &c., &c.

But the *conscience!* Ay, *that* is untouched—there is no individual application to themselves. Talk of criminality, and they take up the Newgate Calendar.—(H. More.)

Now these “withered away!” The reason of this was,
1. An inward defect—the rock was under, and had never been broken up. “They had no *depth* of earth,” and thus they lacked moisture. 2. Outward circumstances were perhaps unfavourable. They had not the benefit of church communion, or of those who, like Jonah’s gourd, might have screened their naked heads. The sun rose and “they were scorched:” temptation came, and they stumbled; the reproach of Christ.

* * * We admire your understandings, and if *eternity*

were not connected with our discourses, we should be perfectly satisfied—our point would be gained. We admire your sensibilities—we could weep with you. We have wept over you in secret, and oh! how often have our expectations been raised when we have seen the effect produced upon you. But religion must enter your hearts deeper than this! “Break up the fallow ground!” Cry unto God to do it for you.*

III. *Worldly-minded persons.*

“And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.” These are superior to the two former classes. Perhaps they are the greater portion in the church of God, for the text gives us reason to infer their membership. This class is not confined to *one* grade in society. “The cares of this world” are not confined to the poor, nor the love of “riches” to the rich: and oh! the danger of those that “*will be rich!*”—The seed has taken deep root; we have seen the grace of God in you! But the poor became “careful about many things,” and others could not bear prosperity, and thus these “thorns” have overtopped the good seed. It is now pale, yellow, jaundiced, sickly, and ready to perish, and bears no fruit to perfection:

* * * The love of God is a tender plant! it must not be shut out from the sun. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God [and he only] abideth forever.” “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” (*Fletcher.*)—Oh! what a blight has come over you—(*Wolsey*)—and that when he thinks his prospects are ripening. Oh! how have we anticipated the ripe fruit in the ear!—*Vain!*—

IV. *Good and honest hearts.*

“But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.” Thank God, we have some reward then! These are pre-

* Clarke, in loco.

pared, regular, fruitful—they are planted in the house of God, and hence fat and flourishing in old age—evergreens—bearing fruit every month.

Application.—See that you make up the deficit of the ungodly—bear fruit, thirty-fold, sixty-fold, a hundred-fold! While others blaspheme, do you hallow; while they defame, do you entreat; when they curse, do you bless: “Be filled with the fruits of righteousness.”—The reapers, the angels, are at hand!

Finally. One reflection connected with the subject is truly awful, that three parts out of four of the seed goes to waste! *Good seed* too! the fault is not there. Is it in God? “Lord, pardon me the question!” Is it in the *sower*? “Lord, lay not this sin to *my* charge!” Is it in the hearers then? Oh! I am sick at heart! That three out of four in this assembly may receive the seed in vain! Oh! fearful! Let every man put the question to himself, “Lord, is it I?”

But oh! at the harvest, the end of the world! Shall three out of four in this assembly *perish*? Lord, who is it? “Lord, are there few that be saved?”

SERMON XXX.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Hebrews, vi., 1.—Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.

PAUL'S style is parenthetical. In the preceding chapter he had been giving a luminous view of the priesthood of Christ, and that in the highest point of comparison possible: the Melchisedaical.—But, as if feeling the incompetence of his hearers, he is struck off from his purpose in the eleventh verse of fifth chapter, and through the remainder of that as well as of sixth chapter he follows the train of thought induced, and resumes his plan only in the beginning of seventh chapter: “For this Mel-

chisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of Peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually."

Our text is intimately connected with the words preceding; thus, after speaking of Melchisedec, the apostle continues: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even to those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." What may we not infer from this but that our people generally are still dull of hearing? How little do they know, compared with what they *might*; and how often is the minister of Christ obliged again to lay "the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God;" and, consequently, to stop short of those riches of Divine truth which lie scattered so plentifully on the sacred page!

Nor would I have this considered an arrogant train of reasoning. I would preach it to *myself* also. O how many delightful spots are there yet in the sacred field of Divine truth which *my* eye never saw! How many green pastures on which *I* never reclined! How many pure fountains whose bubbling waters *I* never tasted! Brethren, we are all guilty herein! How much more might we have known of God, his nature, his perfections! How much more experience might we have had of his grace in our hearts! How much more might we have known of the glories of his throne, and how much more frequently might we have been rapt up as into the third heavens! "Whether in the body I cannot tell," &c.

But there is another inference which we may derive from the text : “ Leaving these first principles of the doctrine of Christ,” let us this morning outstep the ordinary bounds, and “ go on unto perfection.”

- I. The object contemplated.
- II. The manner of its attainment.

I. The object contemplated—*Perfection*.

Much has been said and written on this subject, and yet it is little understood by many. The primary meaning which the apostle applies to the term is doubtless, *A preparedness of our intellectual powers to take in the truths of God*. From the character which our meditation has assumed, this must be evident. And will any one say that this is not necessary to our receiving the deep things of God?—There are those, I know, who profess much knowledge of Divine truths, and yet have no experimental enjoyment of them. We see in them that there may be a clear apprehension of the things of God apart from their operation on the heart. But then this is not called *the knowledge* of Divine things in Scripture. I have no idea of *light* separate from *life*; the word is *living*—spirit and life—and it must produce life where it is *known* in the true sense of the word. There is, I admit, a great difference between the knowledge of a fact and the conviction of it; but the latter only is the *saving knowledge*—*knowledge* connected with *feeling*.—Let a man know that he is *a sinner*, and know it so as to *feel the sentence of death in himself*, and he will be quickened to cry unto God for mercy. Let him know the remedy in the Saviour of sinners, and his knowledge will not be of that vague and general character which regards him as the Saviour of men: he will have an individual personal property in him as *his* Saviour. Thus might we trace in all the Christian’s life the connexion inseparable between light and life. “The light is the life of men!”

After this explanation, you will not startle at my having commenced the subject of *perfection* with the primary meaning of the apostle in reference to knowledge. Perfect

knowledge touches at every point of the Christian character : it is connected with perfect love, perfect humility, perfect purity, &c., &c., &c.

But I shall not stop here. We come more immediately to the nature of perfection.—For the right understanding of this we may consider it in four points of view.

First. Absolute perfection. This *can* belong to God *only*, for it is impossible, in the nature of things, that this should attach to a *creature*. *Infinity* is essential to *absolute* perfection. Whatever qualities we may discover in any being, however *amiable* and *excellent*, yet, if its means be limited, no absolute perfection *can* exist. This perfection, therefore, can only belong to God. And it is strange that men still use the term *absolute* in connexion with finite creatures, and thus wilfully stumble at what is not affirmed.

Secondly. We may consider it in the nature of beings themselves compared with other beings.—This is *relative* perfection, and has reference to any *kind* of beings whatever, limited to its own species. Thus we speak of a flower, a plant, a tree, as being perfect in its kind, &c.

But, leaving the world of inanimate nature—and a thousand illustrations would offer therein—we look into the world above. Now *there* exists a class of beings called *angels*, and these are perfect in their nature and kind ; *that* is the perfection of an angel, archangel, throne, power, &c.

But to bring all this to bear on *us*. You have heard of the perfection of *Adam*, or Adamic perfection ; that was the perfection of a being, all of whose powers and faculties were complete and without the slightest derangement ; he was perfect after his *kind*—and now the perfection of man in the present state of things is the perfection to which the Gospel leads him, and which Wesley fitly called *Christian* perfection.

What the nature of this is we must consider afterward ; but how much would have been spared from the stock of human passion if this definition had been attended to ! There is a perfection of a Christian man, after *his kind*. * *

Thirdly. We may consider it again as to the attainment of the highest possible *degree* after his kind.

This differs from the former in this, that it leads us to stretch after the highest *point* in that perfection to which our nature is capable. If we may speculate in mysteries, we might say that the perfection of an angel is in rising to the highest *point* of attainment of which his nature is capable; and, to bring this point to bear on ourselves, the perfection of a Christian consists in his stretching after and attaining to the highest point of which his nature is capable.—A child is perfect after his *kind*; that is, he has a perfection of *parts*, but not yet a perfection of *degrees*: and this will illustrate the meaning.—His *nature* is capable of more.

Fourthly. The term perfection is again used where there is an adaptation in the person or thing for the purpose for which it was designed.

Many instances occur in Scripture wherein the term is applied in this sense to our Saviour—his adaptation to the work on which he had entered. When anything answers the place for which it was intended, exactly fitting it, it is *perfect*. Thus, for example, we talk of a *perfect musician*; that is, one every way qualified for his profession: a *perfect scholar*, one fitted for that department of science which he fills, &c.

Now to bring this to bear on us: when the man is perfectly adapted for every requirement of the Christian character; when there is in him a meetness for every part of his calling, for time and eternity—there is a perfect Christian!

II. The manner of its attainment.

Now let us endeavour to condense all these ideas. We have to speak of *Christian perfection*.

1. It must be obvious, in the nature of things, that this does not mean a perfection of *knowledge*; this is not essential. Here we shall always “see through a glass darkly;” that is, in a *reflected* medium, and, therefore, not clearly. The *outlines* may be discovered, but there will be too much dimness to be correct in our view.

What does this teach us but that we should bear and forbear? “Judge no man before the time, until the Lord

come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart." Many have been mistaken here; they have fancied they had *all knowledge*: and with a very high-sounding profession, they have exhibited the character of the cynic and the censor; their spirit has not harmonized with their profession, and I have put such down for much less than they have boasted; they have pretended to discern spirits and detect motives; but let such know that "the wisdom from above (if, indeed, theirs *is* from above) is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." O there is a tender-heartedness in the perfection of a Christian removed from this! An offence against the rule of *loving kindness* is an offence against the Christian character—*loving kindness* is the prominent feature of a Christian! But this leads us to see,

2. That, though a perfection of knowledge is unattainable, there is a perfection of love! "Perfect love," says St. John—this is *Christian perfection*, when love *stands out visibly*, and draws every other power into exercise under its presiding influence.

This is the perfection of God—"God is love;" and every other attribute of his, whether holiness, justice, goodness, truth, &c., is but a *modification* of this essential principle—the existence of this love in a certain mode!

This, then, must be my perfection. Love must be prominent; it must draw out the memory—the judgment—touch the spring of action, &c.—O what a heaven is this! when love dwells in the heart, looks out at the eye, beams in the face, breathes from the lips, distils from the hands, moves in the feet, and creates an atmosphere all around which angels might delight to inhale! "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us."

3. The highest possible *point* of attainment in Christian perfection is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thy heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and thy neigh-

bour as thyself." Without a metaphysical definition of terms, our Lord means that "we should love with the *whole* man." Here, then, behold the perfection in *kind*: "Love him with thy heart;" and in *degree*: "with *all thy heart*." St. John says that "*perfect love* casteth out fear;" such a thing, therefore, must *exist*, or how did he know?

O! if this principle, thus carried out in its fullest extent, had full operation in *my* heart! O how should I preach, and act, and think! O where do the Christians live? Had it operation in yours, then might it be said of you, "See how these Christians love!" O how it would

"Burn up the dross of base desire,
And make the mountains flow!"

O how it would destroy all evil surmising, all uncharitableness, &c.!—Lord, purify us to thyself! Sublimate our affections!

Now this is what we call *holiness*, which I would define as the perfect harmony of every part of the Christian character. The holiness of God is the harmony of all his attributes, the unity of all his perfections, *love being the common centre*. The holiness of a Christian is the harmony of the whole man with the abounding principle of love; all his thoughts and actions evolve from this centre, are held in restraint thereby, and all feel the power of its mighty rule! Love is all!

4. But in our definition of perfection there is another idea we have to glance at, and we can only touch it: this is the adaptation now of such a man for the sphere for which God designed him.

O how he steps out into life! See him!—serving God and his generation! His is not a *principle* of life merely, but life in *full vigour*. A child can talk, and a paralytic can crawl, but the perfect man opens *his* mouth with wisdom; the law of loving kindness is on his lips; he is eyes to the blind and feet to the lame; he mounts up to heaven as on wings; he runs without weariness; he is a vessel unto honour; he is fitted by the Master's hand! O what a state is this! * * * * *

"Now the God of peace, which brought again from the dead

our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect *to do his will*, there is the point!—and then his will is done on earth as in heaven!

SERMON XXXI.

GOD'S LOVE TO A PERISHING WORLD.

John, iii., 16.—For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

OF all subjects, that of human redemption is the most important.—Of all the contents of this Bible, though the elements of all knowledge are in it, &c.—Of all passages in Scripture this is the grandest! It is the announcement of Him who came from the bosom of the Father; this single passage concentrates the whole.

Consider,

- I. The subjects of this love.
- II. The effect of it.
- III. The final design and end.

I. The subjects of this love—"The *world*." It will be useless to give its various senses. It here means, as any unlettered man would see, the whole of intelligent beings on our globe, the thing containing—that is, "the *world*"—being put for that which is contained.

1. If, then, "*God loved the world*," he loved first those who *deserved* no such regard. We were enemies when God loved us; this is the commendation of it.—Behold what manner of love is here! and yet "*God loved the world*!"

2. If so, he loved those who were *unable to do* anything to merit it; we were "*without strength*;" there dwelt in us no good thing. We were not *guilty* only, but *corrupt*; and yet "*God loved the world*!"

3. If so, he loved those who never *desired*, as well as never *deserved* his love. If man had manifested any willingness to return to his allegiance, &c.; but "*The carnal*

mind was *enmity* against God," and yet "God loved the world!"

4. If so, he loved those who had actually *demerited* everlasting punishment! Ours was not a *negative* state merely, but a *positive*. The law had come home, and sentence was passed.—Yet, under all these circumstances, "God loved the world!"

"But what," it may be asked, "was the motive?" I know that answers have been attempted—vain man would pry into the reasons of the Divine mind!—It is said, that though man is morally depraved, yet that he is of great intellectual worth, &c.

There are reasons against this.

1. For aught we know, angels were of higher intellect; yet devils were not redeemed. 2. The greater the intellect, the greater the crime, and the more hateful the sinner. Besides, sin has a weakening tendency even on intellect, and we cannot tell how contracted we should have been but for the redemption of Jesus; this, therefore, cannot have been the *cause* of that redemption!

3. But mainly, the Scriptures nowhere represent God's love thus: they run in different language: "He remembered us in our *low* estate." Whatever intellectual worth man might have had while innocent, the crown is fallen, and his honour is in the dust.

This view, then, does not sufficiently hide pride from man!

The Scriptures always represent redemption as from the *innate love of God!* and this is not incongruous if we consider,

1. "God's ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts." There is an incomprehensibility in them, &c.

2. That love is one of the Divine attributes, and the perfection and centre of the whole.

3. That this attribute is *infinite* as every other; and when *infinite love* is at work, who can tell what shall be produced?

4. That the glory of God is the great *end* of all his actions, and he saw that a greater glory would redound to his excellent name in the salvation than in the destruction of

our race.—The cross clusters around it, His brightest glories. “God *only* knows the love of God!”

II. The effect of God's love.

If this love had been merely exercised in *pity*, it would have been of little use; though still kind in God to notice us at all! It was active—“He gave his Son!”

1. “*His Son*,” in a proper sense—above angels and men. God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, &c. Not his Son by *creation*, for he is not a creature; not by *adoption*, for he was never an alien—*his own Son—Divine!* “To the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever!”

2. “His *only* Son.” If another, the wonder not so great.—The family in Germany.—“He did always those things which pleased the Father.” We admire Abraham's faith, but there is no parallel, though a type.—In this, God only resumes what was his own; but Jesus was independent! Isaac a *creature*, and Abraham the bestower, a *creature* also. But see the *infinite God* giving his *eternal Son!*

3. He *gave* him—voluntarily; no obligation—and gave him as a sacrificial offering (Isaiah, liii.); and *mark*, also, *Jesus gave himself!*

We pity the weakness of those who are eternally professing I know not what of reason, &c., and deride the Gospel plan as unjust, to punish the innocent for the guilty. We know it where it is *constrained*; but who sees not that there may be *substitution?* and in our case it *was* so. Jesus being an independent being, the Father had no claim there, but he *offered himself*: “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O God.”

O this gift! Jesus is now *ours—given for us and given to us!*

III. The final design and end of the love of God.

It has two branches: to save from hell—and to exalt to heaven. Can we appreciate this salvation? What would it have been to be *lost! eternally lost?* Tell it, Dives! tell it, devils!—Eternity—for it is parallel to the extent of the *life* to which we are redeemed.

And what would it have been to be *saved?* Oh! angels

above, assist our conceptions!—And this salvation, even knowable *here*—“*hath everlasting life;*” “*hath passed from death to life.*” * * * * *

“*Whosoever believeth.*”—But, then, this salvation is still by faith. Has Jesus no right to have the honour of our salvation by prescribing the terms?—*Submit* to the righteousness of God.—“Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?”

Yet mark the wisdom of this—it is salvation by *grace*, though through faith; and “it is of *faith, that it might be by grace.*” Pride is hid from man. No works of righteousness are prescribed; “*believe,*” is the Gospel law—and believe *now*; and mark, *continue* to believe—for there must be an enduring *to the end.*

“*Whosoever.*” Oh! mourning man—backslider, &c., art thou doubting? mark, “*whosoever.*”—Bless God for this word!—no exception—*thou* art the man.—See all *thy* sins on Jesus laid! Believe—believe—go not away. * *

If God's love in redemption be not universal, he is worse to us than the devil. He has made us with powers of intellect capable of recollecting the past, reflecting on the present, and anticipating the future.

By his Spirit he alarms *all*, from time to time, and gives them hell in anticipation.

Satan never torments before the time; he blindfolds, and is willing we should enjoy all the pleasures of sin for a season, and wakes us not to any alarm.

Much has been said on this subject, but it is not exhausted. There is an eternity of meaning in one little word which we have not yet touched. “*So.*”

1. *So* loved them? Why, then, he loved man more than he loved any other intelligent creature; he passed by angels.

2. *So* loved them? Yes! and on this creature man he bestowed his greatest gift—a gift whose value angels never told.—Archangels fail to cast the high account.

3. *So* loved him? Yes, so as to run out the line of his benevolence to its *end*; he could do no more; his power might yet act, but a greater display of love than this, *Omnip-*

otence could not perform. In creation we see the *hand*, in redemption the *heart* of God!

4. *So* loved them? as to paralyze hell, as well as heaven in astonishment. "Angels' minds are lost to ponder."
So loved them? as to render his love unutterable!

"And when you've raised your highest notes,
 His love can ne'er be told."

Application:

1. The views we should entertain of God the Father.
2. The proper view of the value of Christ's blood.
3. Believe the record God has given.
4. Love him again, and keep his commandments.

SERMON XXXII.

THE HEAVENLY GLORY.

A FAREWELL DISCOURSE.

Psalm xvi., 11.—In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.

OUR attachments here, even as Christians, are liable to be broken or loosed, sometimes by the sacrilegious hand of violence, sometimes by the calls of duty, sometimes by Providential circumstances: in the last two cases, the attachment remains in spirit; and this leads us to remember each other and to inquire after absent friends.

This mutability has the effect in good men of leading them onward to that place where they shall be no longer strangers nor pilgrims—the everlasting home! In the prospect of our separation we cannot do better than direct you to that heaven where there "is *fulness* of joy," and to "God's right hand, where there are pleasures *for evermore*."

Jesus adopted the same method in removing from his disciples: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

The context refers to the eternal world, and directs us,

- I. To the place.
- II. The nature of our state.

I. To the place: "*In thy presence*"—"at thy right hand." These are metaphors adapted to our senses.

"*In thy presence.*" God is an infinite Spirit—possesses no parts—he is equally in hell as in heaven—we cannot flee from his presence. But any place where he has made a *visible* display of his glory may more especially be called his presence—Moses and the bush. That such a *visible display* of glory exists somewhere, St. John assures us in Revelations: "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Our Lord also points us to the place by saying, "Our Father who art in *heaven*." *Heaven*, then, is the place.

We speak of three heavens in the Scriptures: 1. The *atmosphere*: "Cities walled up to *heaven*." 2. The *sidercal*: "When I consider the *heavens* the work of thy hands, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained." 3. The *empyrean*: "The palace of angels and God." St. Paul was "caught up to the third heaven." All the Scriptures lead us to conclude that there is a *visible display* there; hence it is called "The presence of God."

"*At thy right hand.*" This may signify a place of *favour*; thus in Matt., xxv.: "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats: and he shall set the sheep on his *right hand*, but the goats on his left." A place of *dignity* also—Jesus Christ is exalted there. A place of *conquest*: "This honour have all his saints." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." He that comes

off more than conqueror shall sit down at the right hand of Jesus. The Christian well compared to a soldier.

Heaven, then, is a *place* as well as a *state*. "I go to prepare a *place* for you," said our Lord to his disciples.—We must attach space to bodies—Moses, Enoch, Elijah, and the bodies of the saints. * * * * *

II. The nature of our state. "*Joy and pleasures.*"

Metaphysical definition. * * * Joy may signify here the delight arising from the direct immediate enjoyment of God; and pleasure, the collateral sources of happiness which heaven shall furnish.

We need not separate them, but, uniting them, understand,

1. The fulness, the perfection of our happiness—joy.

2. The perpetuity of it—for evermore!

But wherein shall this happiness consist? "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him." Impossible for man to utter; but we may follow Revelation *safely*. (Swedenberg.)

1. It will consist in the perfection of our nature. The *body* "sown in dishonour"—human nature in disgrace, &c.—"it was sown an animal body, it shall be raised a spiritual body." The *mind*, also—not then informed by analogies, reasonings, and demonstrations, but by direct communications.

2. Exemption from *sorrow* and *fear*—"Born to trouble;" pain, sickness, wearisome days and nights. Those can best appreciate this exemption who thus suffer.—Our *fears*, too, are equal to our sorrows: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"—incessant attacks from the powers of hell.—Our collected sighs would raise a tempest; our united tears would form a deluge! Now this very negative happiness, methinks, should endear heaven to us.

3. The nature of our employment. We may harmlessly suppose that we shall be like angels, ministering spirits to

other worlds. Heaven is a state of rest, but not of quiescence: man must be active—freed from weariness, because his body will be no longer corporeal—quick in motion as thought, &c., &c.

Another employment will be *contemplation*.—The works—Providence—Redemption.

Another, *praise*. St. John, in Revelation, speaks without a figure in describing the harpers, &c.—The four-and-twenty elders falling down and worshipping, &c.—and again he uses every earthly sound which nature could furnish: “The sound of a great multitude—many waters—mighty thunders.”—The Lamb the burden of the song!

4. Again, we shall meet our friends there.—We have all some—revered parents—affectionate husbands—tender partners—or lovely children—

“Urge onward, they cry
As they flit through the sky.”

We shall also meet “the general assembly and church of the first-born.”—

5. The presence, the vision, the enjoyment of God! This is the bliss of heaven! The schoolmen ask, “How can we see God?” God never manifested himself in any other way than through Christ Jesus. We see his works, but they were all created by Christ Jesus.—Providence—but all under the guidance of Christ Jesus; Redemption—but it was effected by Christ Jesus! Golden letters! “See him as he is!” In him concentrated, imbodyed, the Father and the Spirit—the middle person—the connecting link! Angels gaze here with astonishment!

This “*fulness of joy*” will be a continual *progression* also.—Its perpetuity—“A perpetuity of bliss is bliss!”

Application.—Sinner! it doth not yet appear what thou shalt be. “Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive it.”

Believer! Press on, no matter what cheer.

SERMON XXXIII.

GOD IN HIS SANCTUARY.

Isaiah, iv., 5.—And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night : for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

THE context shows that our text refers to the times of the Messiah. * * * * *

I. Religious worship, whether in the family or the sanctuary, is particularly regarded by God.

“Mount Zion” is the Church of the living God, &c.—it only refers to praying families; *no others* in the Church of God. (Includes also private prayer; and for this family prayer is not a substitute. What a solemnity, a sweetness—a cloud and a smoke, &c., the symbols of the Divine presence! Some Christians have a spot in the closet set apart; it is proper, and not superstitious—the association is great. Fletcher—his wall discoloured by prayer, &c. Have *your* closets been distinguished?—I call conscience—) Sanctuary worship—“her assemblies.” Two or three gathered together. The word *gathered* refers to harmony in music! no sight under heaven more sublime! it is the home where the Father meets his family! Why God hears the *ravens* when they *cry*. * * * *

II. God will express his approval by manifestations of his presence—allusion to the Jews. Not confined to the cloud and pillar—but all the luminous appearances, from the fiery cherubim in Paradise—to the appearances of Jesus—they showed a present God—appeared to patriarchs—tabernacle—and settled in the Holy of Holies. It represented the throne of the Messiah; there was no beauty if Jesus separated from it; it was the shrine of Deity, and gave the temple its sanctity.

Now this, having reference to Jesus, has given way to his spiritual appearance in your hearts; the benefits of the

Jews from the Sheehinah were a type of the benefits of Jesus among us. What were these ?

1. The manifestation of truth—the Urim and Thummim—the high-priest appeared before the Sheehinah with these on his heart—“*perfect lights* ;” this was their design—more important than their form.

There is nothing dark in the answer of God, but clearly typical of the manifestation of Divine truth by Jesus Christ in the Gospel ; Jesus Christ the only medium through which we can have knowledge of God, redemption, and the way of worship. He the Father has declared Head over all to his Church. We have come here, then, to *inquire* of the Lord ; this is the proper place to behold the *beauty* of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. We may see much beauty in nature and Providence ; but, for his full-orbed character, come into the sanctuary. The view of creation touches not the penitent’s case ; the sun, moon, stars cannot preach the Gospel—cannot answer “ What shall I do to be saved ?” Travel round creation—all is silent here—the sinner is driven back on his own guilty state. But come where the Urim and Thummim are, come into the sanctuary, “ Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”

“ See all your sins on Jesus laid,
The Lamb of God was slain ;
His soul was once an off’ring made
For every soul of man.”

The Holy Spirit will lead up the hill of Calvary—“ Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven.”

This applies to every doctrine of the Gospel—all is through Jesus Christ. * * * * * *

2. The display of holiness—an important object.—Wherever the Sheehinah appeared, an impression of holiness.—Moses and the bush—the Holy of Holies.

Thus, in the manifestation of the Gospel, we have not only a display of truth, but of holiness also.—“ God is in this place ;” perhaps I knew it not. How solemn the mind should be—what a display of holiness !

It is intended that we should *seek* this holiness, “ behold

ing, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we should be *changed* into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." All the promises assure us that we may be holy. Jesus Christ is our model. Put on Christ, and be found in him.

The manifestation of Divine truth is not for speculation, but to sanctify: "Sanctify them through thy truth." I preach in vain otherwise, and you hear in vain. God is the great standard, and the end of all is perpetual assimilation to him through time and eternity.—Here it is slow, but eternity is to be employed in increasing the likeness.

3. Communication of comfort. The cloud *covered* Israel in a heated atmosphere; it dropped dew, and they were baptized in the cloud. Is not this the end of the spiritual manifestation? The Holy Ghost is called the Comforter. When we are dried up, with inward grief, God comforts us; distils a dew which revives; and when ready to perish he strengthens us. How often have you found it so in your closets when your hearts were surcharged with grief—not a word was uttered—you groaned—then God appeared—light burst in—refreshing influence! Then the sluices opened; you could then pray, and went forth blessed.—Is it not so in the assembly also? See that orphan, that widow, that prodigal dissolved in tears. To communicate happiness God is present: "God will dwell among them." For what purpose? "He will wipe away all tears from their eyes."

III. These manifestations of the Divine presence constitute the glory of the Church.

What was the Temple without it? No sacred fire then—a solitude; no show of truth, holiness, or happiness. Apply this.—What made the second temple more glorious than the first? "I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts." And how is *this* house filled with glory? It is not in the altar, the shew-bread, the ark, or the manna, but the internal operation of Jesus' presence walking among the candlesticks, trimming them, &c.; when Christ crucified is the minister's theme: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Every

other doctrine bears on this. Learning may aid, eloquence may be powerful, moral virtue may please some; but what will convince, convert, save? The preaching of the cross only—it is the power of God! Many may say, “If thou hadst been here, my brethren had not, our congregations had not, died.” When this is absent the glory is departed. Our glory is the exhibition of Jesus Christ.—Ichabod.

IV. “Over all this glory shall be a defence.”

The point is, this glory is its own defence; persecution may come, but not destruction—where Jesus is, cannot be consumed—the bush—the Jewish temple.—While the Shechinah is there, all is right—not a stone removed; but when, “Let us depart,” &c. ! The Asiatic churches—now the crescent waves! While the Church walks in truth and the love of Jesus, it cannot be hurt. True, it has often been persecuted. Mangled victims, &c. But destroyed? No; the time came, &c. Safe was the ark; the pilot with us, &c.

Appeal.—You are living in the splendour of the Shechinah. Jesus is set for the *falling* and rising of many in Israel. Believers, faith alone can change you from glory to glory; live for a higher manifestation; walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. * * *

SERMON XXXIV.

PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM.

PREACHED DURING THE SESSION OF CONFERENCE.

Psalm cxxii., 6.—Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee

DAVID'S zeal for the glory of God. “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.” This zeal has embalmed his memory—example to Solomon.—God long lingered his judgments upon Judah for David's sake. “Is any left of the house of *David*?” * * * (Mephibosheth.)

David a model to *us*. Live we not too much to ourselves?—enlarged spirit of Christianity—Jerusalem which is *above* is yet with us—David's greater Son therein.—Pray for *this* Jerusalem. * * * *

- I. The nature of the good contemplated.
- II. The means of attainment proposed.
- III. The motive to this expressed.

I. The nature of the good contemplated.

Pray for the *peace* of Jerusalem—primarily Jerusalem in Palestine—but we, for the spiritual prosperity of the Church. Wherein does it consist?—*Prosperity* is the word, not *peace* only; the original means more.

1. Not merely increase of numbers, although this is desirable, else the walls not raised. But this is no sign of piety.—Rome.—Constantine.

2. Nor in worldly honour—'tis to be desired—yet this is not the glory.—Perhaps the Church was purest when poorest. “Not many mighty, not many noble are called.”

You know what a *church* is. We look at it internally: its prosperity is then seen.

First. *In its spirituality*.—All glorious within—fruit of the heart—an Israelite indeed.—That church is most prosperous wherein is most *fruit*—orchard—“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.”

1. I refer to the character of the ministry in the spirituality of the Church—under the influence of the Holy Spirit—not in a nice selection of subjects. The ministry ought to be dealers of bread “for instruction in righteousness.” Awful responsibility! The burden of the Lord!—often they sigh in secret. Their zeal is a fire from a beam of the Son of Righteousness—their lips a live coal—an influence unseen by mortals—they are a medium for God to exert his power in—the minister an organ of God! * * *

2. I refer to spirituality in the people. You must come not to be amused. It is when the minister is under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and with a praying people—then, &c., &c.

Secondly. The prosperity of the Church is seen *in its purity*—in discipline.—In admission and exclusion we must know no man after the flesh—neither father nor mother. These are subjects for prayer! “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”—Laxity of discipline is awful!—(Miller’s anecdote of Wesley.)—On admission he ought to show that he is fleeing the wrath to come. * * * None should be kept in who are immoral—no poor man—no *rich* man; no partiality should be shown to the rich!—inflexible moral discipline. Then our ministers and people will be examples in *moral practice* also; and then the minister can say, “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.”

Thirdly. Our prosperity is evidenced by *unity* and *harmony*. Satan tries to destroy this—“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (Contention—gladiator-like!—the *arena* of the Church.) *Love!* makes the church a family circle—sympathy, tenderness, forbearance, golden words of kindness! love! love! spreads from one to another. It is the atmosphere over the Church. Angels come to breathe in it, and God dwells in it. “God is love.”

Fourthly. *Multiplication* and *extension*. The Church is not to remain stationary.—This mark is evidently among us—pause here—reflect on it!

Our quantum of *spirituality* is unknown to us; yet my *all* depends on *my* spirituality—*yours* also. Do you feel alive in the closet?—(Moses’ face)—family prayer, &c. * * *

We have the evidence of *purity* among us, in practice and discipline—may we go on in this! “Which of you convinceth us of sin?” Not that we are perfect.—Achan—Ananias and Sapphira—Judas, &c., &c. There may be many whom discipline may not touch. Sin is bad—but a million times worse to commit sin *in the Church*. Quit sin, or quit us; we want a holy Church.

We have the evidence of *harmony* among us. True, there may be at times a jar; earth is not heaven; yet we *do* love one another; we have your hearts, and you have ours; thus we are labourers together, and God is with us.

We have the evidence of *extension*. We do not magnify

ourselves—we should hate ourselves if capable of it—but we lay all at the feet of Jesus! Yet we can say, “Ye are our children.” If these walls could speak, “the stone would cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber would answer it;” yea, if angels could speak out here, they would say of this and that man that they were born here. Rejoice, then, and shout for joy. Yet these are but the *beginning* of good days. Then pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

II. The means of attainment proposed.

Prayer. I cannot express my feelings on this—“Paul may plant, Apollos water, but God alone giveth the increase.” It is a first principle that *all* good is from God. Your preachers can do nothing. “Brethren, pray for us.” We entreat you, pray, &c., not for our comfort, &c., but our usefulness.

Remember, you must *love* Zion. “They shall prosper that *love* her.” Prayer is only the effect of this. And not only are you to pray, but you are to exert yourselves: “I will *seek* thy good.” Christianity has no *dead* members; *all* my means, talents, influence, &c., must be employed.

III. The motive.

This brings the matter to a point. “My leanness, my leanness;” and why? You long to feel better, to handle the word of life, &c. But “when I attempt to rise I am beaten back.” This is the reason, “I have not loved Zion more.” Many lose sight of their connexion with Zion as a *body*; if so, you will never prosper in your own souls. It is as easy to prove it as the Divinity of Jesus! Am I to live for myself only, or my family? No; for the whole world.

You may not, perhaps, *prosper* in the *world*—the Holy Ghost did not mean this in the text. God looks for the other world. But, if devoted to the prosperity of Zion, God will direct all the streams of the Church for my good. His angels are charged with the care of me; his finger will lead me, and point me out to the heavenly host.

Application.—Let us now pray and believe for the coming year.—“Lord, revive thy work.”

Pray for your ministers ; they are the medium of God for knowledge and holiness to his Church. * * * I know you love them ; but have you prayed enough for them ? We must live in your hearts.—I shall die otherwise. * * *

* * * * *

SERMON XXXV.

O THAT I KNEW WHERE I MIGHT FIND HIM.

Job, xxiii., 3, 4.—O that I knew where I might find him ! that I might come even to his seat !

I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

MANY opinions on this book ; probably the most ancient, and certainly the noblest composition in the world. Some think the author Solomon, from the uncommon grandeur of the style, &c. Others, though with little probability, Ezra. The current opinion is in favour of Moses, while keeping Jethro's flock, and designed as a word of consolation to his Hebrew brethren then suffering in Egypt—a drama. * * * Job's friends contend that great afflictions are certainly the wages of great sinners, &c. They entirely mistake his case and character. Job contends for his innocence ; but, failing to convince them, he inquires where he shall find the Lord as his Judge. “O that I knew where I might find him ! that I might come even to his seat ! I would order my cause before him ; I would fill my mouth with arguments.”

As these words are often the language of a penitent heart seeking the Saviour, Comforter, and Sanctifier, who wishes to come to his seat, &c., inquire,

I. Who are the characters that employ this language ? It is language highly becoming every son of Adam ; all are morally distant from God ; yet how few employ it ! What will please my senses and increase my treasures is *general* ; but how few inquire, Where is God my Saviour ? Only these,

1. The sinner under conviction. The light of heavenly

truth has discovered to him his sins. He sees that God alone can save him, but he has provoked his Majesty. Hence he appears as one that hideth himself in darkness. In his distress the penitent hears, reads, prays, "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." Still, an intolerable load is pressing him down, and he exclaims, "O that I knew where I might find him!"

2. Believers in distress. Their piety, as Job's, gives no exemption from distress. But, besides the afflictions common to others, there are times when temptation, persecution, reproach, and the feelings of unsanctified nature, &c., during which they may deplore the absence of their Lord. Perhaps unbelief prevails, and they know not whither they should go.

3. Penitent backsliders. As backsliders they are common; but, as penitent ones, rare. They have known God, but wickedly departed; have walked in light, but "the light that was in them has become darkness." Once they were in the way to heaven, but now "their feet go down to death, and their steps take hold on hell." But mercy—and oh! how great that mercy—has made them willing to return. But what reflections do they endure? The clear light and bleeding love against which they have sinned! the effect of their ungracious example; the wound inflicted on the cause of God; and especially their ingratitude to that God who found them in a waste howling wilderness—led, and fed, and bore them as on eagles' wings!—"O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments." These few characters we would assist.

II. Point out where the Lord may be found. And where is it? or, rather, where is he *not*? "If we ascend up to heaven, he is there; if we make our bed in hell, behold, he is there." His centre is everywhere: "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." * * *

1. In his *works*, as a God of *power*. In everything crea-

ted does his presence appear. In every *body*, from the largest celestial orb placed, &c., hanging, &c., moving, &c., to the smallest atom, invisible to the most powerful optic glass, and the existence of which is only shown by the power of elective attraction. In every *agent in nature*, from the gentlest breath of air that scarcely moves the leaf to the furious hurricane that lashes the sea, &c., and tears the deep-rooted forest. "He rides upon the storm." From the latent spark of fire which lies hid in the flint, to the vivid lightning which glares with death, or the bursting volcano which shakes the earth with its thunder, darkens heaven with its smoke, desolates fruitful provinces with its lava, and threatens to burn the world. From the smallest particle of dew which glistens on a blade of grass, or hangs in the bell of a flower, to the immeasurable ocean.

He is present in *every animal*—the sportive shoals in their briny element; the frantic-winged inhabitants of the air; from the unwieldy elephant to the smallest mite. The earth, dressed in her verdure, proclaims the presence of God; from the tallest cedar and the sturdiest oak, to the bending reed and the hyssop on the wall. But in nothing does his presence more clearly appear, than in the structure of the human body, and the powers of the mind. "Excellent is he in counsel, and wonderful in working."

2. In *Providence*, as a God of *wisdom* and *goodness*—the *Governor* of all. He governs this wonderful fabric—not left to chance. * * * Every occurrence is an event of his Providence, and one of his footsteps, who ruleth over all, and doeth all things as seemeth him good. The provision for man and beast; his daily supply of all things living, with every morsel of food, portion of drink, drop of rain, and breath of air, of every degree of strength and measure of health, with all social comforts—all these manifest his wisdom and his love. Nor less is he to be found in our afflictions, losses, and disappointments—in the place and period of our birth—in our parents and their circumstances. In all the commotions and revolutions of the world, God is present, correcting, instructing, comforting, and so benefiting man.

3. In the *human breast*, as a God of *purity* and *justice*—

Judge of the world. Conscience felt by all—infusing gall into their secret, their sweetest cup. * * * Now, this is God in his own tribunal, beginning that work which the last day will finish, and commencing that punishment which hell will continue, but eternity will not end. Yet from this very source, the believer, though conscious of many defects, cherishes more than a hope that he is God's—an inward assurance that he is such—the “testimony of his conscience.” And this is the beginning of his heaven, the commencement of his final acquittal if he hold on his way—“if his heart condemn him not.” * * * *

4. In the *ordinances of religion*, as a *God of Grace*—the Saviour of men. This is the relation in which he most delights to be sought by men. It is this which is most interesting to sinners, and it is under this character that the persons formerly described are saying, “O that I knew where I might find him!”

Now of these ordinances the *first* is the word of his grace. This reveals his being and unveils his character; it shows his very *heart* through the wounds of his Son. Here he is found “the Lord, gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy,” saying, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” “I will blot out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.” “I will heal all their backsliding.” “God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;” for “it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” * * * *

Here you find *power* omnipotent, and this power is to save. You have *wisdom* and *goodness* greater than in Providence; and all to supply your wants. Here is *purity* and *justice* superior to that of the judgment to justify the ungodly, and the whole combining with *mercy* and *love*, and harmonizing in Christ.

Wish you to find him? Go to his word, and how will you find him? “Waiting to be gracious”—“stretching out his arms all day long!” Go to his word; there you will meet him as a father running to embrace a lost child.

We say again that he is to be found in his *ordinances*; where his Gospel is preached, his people meet to pray, his saints are found discoursing of his goodness, and taking sweet counsel together, and where that love is commemorated which brought him from heaven to the cross. As he has appointed these, so he is present to enlighten, quicken, pardon, comfort, and save.

But it is chiefly on the *throne of Mercy* that he is graciously found. *There*, he is not only seen and heard, but felt and tasted—all invited—there he manifests himself as a sin-forgiving, soul-purifying God. Say you still, “O that I knew where I might find him!”

Lo! God is here! and his works, his words, his Providence, and grace are all designed to bring thee here! Art thou sincere? Canst thou believe? *Thou art at his seat!* Fill thy mouth with arguments.

III. From what sources may you draw arguments?

1. From His *power*. What is thy request? “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” He has all power in heaven and on earth to create, destroy, or renew. To soften a hard heart, pardon a guilty soul, supply a needy mind, deliver an oppressed spirit, sanctify an unholy nature, is a small thing to him who speaks and it is done; who is able to save to the uttermost; who is exceeding abundant in grace and mercy. As this is small to him, yet great to thee, urge his *power* at the foot of his seat. Lord, all fulness is with thee—giving cannot impoverish. Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

2. From His *goodness*. His power is useless to thee without this. But goodness, pure benevolence, is a perfection of his nature, and *infinite*. * * * Good in himself, and in all his works and ways; all the goodness of creatures, angels, and men is from him—good to all—the lower animals—to rebels—how much more to a penitent drawn to his throne! This goodness moves his power. * * * Plead his goodness.

3. From His *mercy*. This is the name he has given himself as most suited to sinners; an attribute he delights to display. It is this that has kept us out of hell. His

mercy is greater than our sins; high as the heavens! Urge his mercy.

4. From His *truth*. He swears he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, while his promises are many and great. "Seek, and ye shall find; ask, and ye shall receive." "He that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Can he lie? or swear falsely? "He is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Plead in faith the word in which he caused you to put your trust.

5. From His *impartiality*. He has been sought and found of the chief of sinners—David, Mary, Peter, Saul—three thousand, who had taken away his life. He is the parent of the great family. All his children are equally dear. As he is unchangeable in nature, so persons, times, and circumstances produce no change in him. He is no respecter of persons. What an argument to plead at his seat!

6. From His *justice*. This appears to sinners stern, inflexible, and severe; and to penitents, awful and terrible. Yet we do not lament, but exult with gladness that he is just. For did Christ die for us? did he meet the claims of justice, and pay our debt of suffering? did he purchase a right to pardon, favour? "He is faithful and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Plead, then, all that is in God, all that Christ has done, and all that you feel and fear.

The end of our being, the preservation of our lives, the ordinances of religion, and our present meeting, is to find God. If we do not find him in mercy, he will find us in anger. Are there any saying, "O that I knew where I might find him?" In everything, in every place, but chiefly *in his word, and always in and through Jesus Christ*. The text is the language of,

1. Sincere regret.
2. Of restless desire.
3. Of guilty fear.
4. Of anxious inquiry.
5. Of willing submission.

SERMON XXXVI.

THE PROGRESS OF VICE.

2 Kings, viii., 13.—And Hazael said, But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?

I. POWER and prosperity are dangerous, and calculated to stir up latent evil.

Many, as they ascend the hill, lose their honesty and become consummate villains.—The moderate tradesman was *tender*, kind; but O! the accumulation of wealth! * * * servants change when they become masters.—Many are virtuous because never tried. * * * *

II. Men commit crimes in later years which in early life they contemplated with dismay. *So Hazael.* * * *

In illustration :

1. There are some sins which are calculated to startle every conscience that has any sensibility left. The want of love to God, &c., mentioned to an angel, would startle him; but man stands coolly by.—* * * They are chiefly crimes affecting human society which affect us.—But let not these feelings be thought real religion. We must go farther than this. True piety has immediate respect to God. Now analyze *your* feelings. Are you concerned that God's commandments should be contemned? We are not necessarily pious because virtuous.

2. So ignorant are many of their own characters, that they are often led to commit the very crimes which were formerly viewed with abhorrence.—Hazael.—Peter.—How ignorant of our weakness.—See the man recovering from sickness. [How earnestly did he promise amendment, but it was all in his own strength; and how soon is he carried away into the same thoughtless and sinful career which he vowed to renounce.] I appeal to the drunkard whether he did not once abhor the intoxicating cup. See the young tradesman beginning business. [With what timidity and upbraidings of

conscience does he commence his fraudulent practices. But mark how fast his conscience hardens, and how rapid his career in crime.]

But see more *criminal* cases. The murderer once shrank at the very thought [of deeds of blood]; but by little and little [he advanced in the path of crime, and now behold the result!]

Let us endeavour to account for this.

1. There was never the existence in these persons of that principle which is the basis of virtue. They were never regenerated—virtue will give way without religion.

2. It is also accounted for by a consideration of the progressive nature of evil: “Hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Sin is the most specious thing in the world. Trace it in a young man tried first with minor sins.—Tempted again—finds less reluctance—is prepared to go a step farther—one sin requires another to conceal it—now joins evil society.—In the next stage we see him confirmed in the habit. Now he begins to lose a sense of shame; *before*, he must have his veil and his mask; [but now he has become a bold transgressor.] Conscience now despairs—it is seared—he has no accusings. The next step is the glorying in his shame! [he is even ambitious to distinguish himself in crime!] The next step is that, having effected his own ruin, he seeks the ruin of others; like his father the devil, he goes about seeking whom he may devour!

Consider some of the practices which help him on.

1. Idleness—stagnant water [sends forth its noxious effluvia]—Satan says, “Why stand ye idle?”—“Be diligent in business.”

2. Sabbath-breaking. No single vice throws an individual more in temptation’s way. It is so open a violation [of order, decency, and the law of God, that he who is guilty of it cannot but ripen fast for ruin.] Beware of devoting this holy day to pleasure or business!—The *whole day* is the Lord’s!—

3. Beware of evil company. “A companion of fools shall be destroyed.” Sinners will do that in company which they would not do solitarily.—Trees grow fastest in a

plantation.—United fires blaze strongest.—O! what curses in hell against evil companions!

4. Infidelity is another means; it is taken up to still the conscience. The Bible is against him, therefore he is against the Bible.—What is to restrain such an unchecked man? Nothing!

5. Extravagance. This must have resources—whether in dress or dissipation. * * * * *

Licensed gambling. May the nation wipe off the blot.—Tax us in any way to make up [what you gain by thus legalizing iniquity]. It is a national example of crime. Nor is private gambling better.

Application.—1. Seek the possession of religion. Nothing but the fear of God will keep us. This is the beginning of wisdom.

This principle must be imparted by God, for we have it not by nature.

2. Beware of self-confidence. Do not say, “My principles so trench me that I am in no danger.” No man is in more danger! God punishes the lofty spirit by giving it up to itself.—All our strength is in God.

3. Beware of the beginning of iniquity.—Do not come near the serpent’s poisonous fang or the lion’s fatal den—distance is safety—“Abstain from the appearance of evil.”

Look up to God by habits of daily prayer for safety. Should God then suffer us to be led into temptation, he will be with us, to see whether this world or the other is uppermost.—Of two evils, two sins, choose neither.—Suffer everything rather than offend God.—How glorious this! How honourable to religion! * * * * *

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SERMON XXXVII.

THE HEAVENLY INHERITANCE.

2 Peter, i., 11.—For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

OF all the causes which may be adduced to account for the indifference which is so generally manifested towards those great concerns of eternity in which they are so awfully interested, none appears to me so likely to resolve the mystery as that unbelief which lies at the core of every heart, hindering repentance, and so making faith impossible. Men hear that there is a hell to shun, a heaven to win; and, though they give their assent to both these truths, they never impress them on their minds; it is plain that, whatever their lips may confess, they never believed with the heart, otherwise some effect would have been produced in the life; the germ of unbelief lies within, and discovers itself in all that indifference which is displayed in the majority of that class of beings whose existence is to be perpetuated through eternity in one or other of these states. * *

If these thoughts do sometimes obtrude themselves on their serious attention, they are immediately banished from their minds; and the dying exclamation of Moses may be taken up with tears by every lover of perishing sinners: "O! that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" When God, by his prophet Isaiah, called the Israelites to a sense of their awful departure from him, his language is, "My people do not know: my people do not *consider*." How few are there like Mary, who *ponder these things in their heart*, who are willing to look at themselves, to pry into eternity, to put the question home,

" Shall I be with the damn'd cast out,
Or number'd with the bless'd?"

This question must sooner or later have a place in your minds, or awful will be your state indeed; let it reach your

hearts *to-day*; and if you pray to the Father of lights, you will soon be enabled in his light to discern so much of yourselves as will cause you to cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" While we shall this morning attempt to point out some of the privileges of the sons of God, O! may your hearts catch the strong desire to be conformed to the living Head, that so an abundant entrance may be ministered unto *you* also into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The privilege to which our text leads us is exclusively applicable to those to whom that question has been solved by the Spirit of God; those who have believed to the saving of their souls, who have experienced redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, and are walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.

I. *The state to which we look forward*: the "everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour."

1. It is a *kingdom*. By this figurative expression our Lord has described the state of grace here and of glory hereafter; our happiness in time and our happiness in eternity. They were wisely so called: Jesus has *said* as well as *done* all things well; for these two states differ not in *kind*, but in *degree*; the one is merely a preparative for the other, and he who has been a subject of the former kingdom will be a subject of the latter. Grace is but the seed of glory, glory is the maturity of grace; grace is but the bud of glory, glory is grace full-blown; grace is but the blossom of glory, glory is the ripe fruit of grace; grace is but the infant of glory, glory is the perfection of grace. Hence our hymn beautifully says, "The men of grace have found glory begun below," agreeing with our Lord's own words, "He that believeth *hath* everlasting life;" he feels even here its glories beginning.—A foretaste of its bliss.

Now the propriety with which these two states are called kingdoms is manifest from the analogy which might be traced between them and the model of a human sovereignty—two or three of the outlines of this model will be sufficient.

In the idea of a kingdom is implied that in some part of its extent there is the residence of a sovereign; for this is essential to constitute it. Now in the kingdom of grace the

heart of the believer is made the residence of the King Invisible! "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" Such know what that promise means, "I will dwell in them, and they shall be my people." St. Paul exultingly cries, "Christ liveth in me."

Again, it is essential that the inhabitants of a kingdom be under the government of its laws. An empire without laws is no sovereignty at all; it ceases to be such, for every inhabitant has an equal right to do that which seems good in his own eyes. Now the subjects of Christ's kingdom of grace are "not without law, but are under a law to Christ;" they do his righteous will! Lastly, it is essential that the subjects of a kingdom be under the protection of the presiding monarch, and that they repose their confidence in him. To the subjects of the kingdom of grace Christ imparts his kingly protection; this is their heritage: "No weapon formed against them shall prosper;" nay, he imparts to them of his royal bounty, and they enjoy all the blessings of an inward heaven.

But how great the perfection of the kingdom of glory mentioned in our text! Does he make these vile bodies his residence *here*? How much more glorious is his temple *above*! how splendid the court of heaven! *There*, indeed, he fixes his throne, and they see him as he is.—Does he exercise his authority here, and rule his happy subjects by the law, the perfect law of love? How much more in heaven! he reigns there forever over them; his government is there wholly by himself; he knows nothing of a rival there; his rule is sole and perfect; there they serve him day and night.—Are his subjects here partakers of his kingly bounty? Much more in heaven! He calls them to a participation of all the joys, the spiritual joys which are at his right hand, and the pleasures which are there for evermore. Yet, after all our descriptions of that glory, it is not yet revealed, and, therefore, inconceivable. But who would not hail such a Son of David? who would not desire to be swayed by such a Prince of Peace? Whose heart would not ascend with the affections of our poet, "O! that with yonder sacred throng," &c.

2. But it is an *everlasting* kingdom! Here it rises in the scale of comparison. Weigh the kingdoms of this world in

this balance, and they are found wanting; for on many we read their fatal history, and ere long we shall see them all branded with the writing of the Invisible Agent—"The kingdom is taken from thee, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof;" "For the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;" they will be all absorbed and swallowed up in the fulness of eternity, and leave not a wreck behind!—Everything here is perishable! The towering diadem of Cæsar has fallen from his head and crumbled into dust; and that kingdom whose sceptre once swayed the world, betwixt whose colossal stride all nations were glad to creep to find themselves dishonoured graves, is now forgotten; or, if its recollection be preserved, its history is emphatically called "*The Decline and Fall.*"

But bring the matter nearer home; apply not to multitudes of subjects, but to your individual experience, and has not that good Teacher instructed you in this sad lesson? We tremble to look at our earthly possessions and enjoyments, lest we should see them in motion, spreading their wings to flee away! How many are there already who, in talking of their comforts, are obliged to go back in their reckoning! Would not this be the language of some of you—"I *had*—I had a husband, the sharer of my joys, the soother of my sorrows; but he is not! I *had* a wife, a helpmeet for me; but where is she? I *had* children to whom I looked up as my support and staff in the decline of life, while passing down the hill; but I am bereaved of my children! I *had* health, and I highly prized its worth; but now my emaciated frame, my shrivelled system, and the pains of nature bespeak that comfort fled! I *had*, or fondly thought I had, happiness in possession! Then I said with Job, "I shall die in my nest!" but ah! an unexpected blast passed over me, and now my joys are blighted! "They have fled as a shadow, and continued not." Yes! time promised you much! perhaps it performed a little; but it cannot do anything for you on which it can grave *eternal*. Its name is mortal, its nature is decay; it was born with man, and when the generations of men shall cease to exist it will cease also;

“Time shall be no longer!” We know concerning these that “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord endureth forever.” Yes! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; glory cannot corrupt! the crown of glory cannot fade! Why? Death will be destroyed; Christ will put this last enemy under his feet, and all will then be eternal life! Oh happy, happy kingdom; nay, thrice happy he who shall be privileged to be its subject!

3. It is the everlasting kingdom of *our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. It is his by claim: “Him hath God the Father highly exalted;” yea, him hath he appointed to be “the Judge of quick and dead;” for though “by the sufferings of death he was made a little lower than the angels,” yet immediately after his resurrection he declares that now “All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth!” The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and he has now the disposal of the offices and privileges of the empire among his faithful followers. This is the idea that the penitent dying thief had on the subject: “Lord, remember me when thou comest into *thy* kingdom;” and St. Paul expresses the same when he says to Timothy in the confidence of faith, “The Lord shall deliver me and preserve me unto *his* heavenly kingdom.” Oh! how pleasing the thought to the child of God, that his ruler to all eternity will be his elder Brother; for he who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; and though he is heir of all things, yet we, as younger branches of the same heavenly family, shall be joint-heirs, fellow-heirs of the same glorious inheritance. How great will be our joy to behold him who humbled himself for us to death, even the death of the cross, now exalted God over all, blessed for evermore; and while contemplating him under the character of *our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, how great the relish which will be given to that feeling of the redeemed which will constrain them to cry, “Thou alone art worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power.”

II. But the apostle reminds us of the *entrance* into this kingdom!

1. The entrance into this kingdom is death: “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin:”

“Death like a narrow sea divides
That heavenly land from ours!”

“A messenger is sent to bring us to God, but it is the *King of Terrors*. We enter the land flowing with milk and honey, but it is through the valley of the shadow of death.” Yet fear not, oh thou child of God! there is no need that thou, through fear of death, shouldst be all thy lifetime subject to bondage. 2. No: hear the apostle: the entrance is *ministered* unto thee! Death is but his minister; he cannot lock his ice-cold hand in thine till *He* permit. Our Jesus has the keys of hell and of death, and till he liberates the vassal to bring thee home, not a hair of thy head can fall to the ground! Fear not, thou worm! he who minds the sparrows appoints the time for thy removal: fear not; only be thou always ready, that, whenever the messenger comes to take down the tabernacle in which thy spirit has long made her abode, thou mayst be able to exclaim, “Amen! even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!” Death need have no terrors for thee; he is the vassal of thy Lord, and, however unwilling to do him reverence, yet to him who sits at God’s right hand shall even death pay, if not a joyful, yet a trembling homage; nay, more:

“To him shall earth and hell submit,
And every foe shall fall,
Till death *expires* beneath his feet,
And God is all in all.”

Christ has already had one triumph over death; his iron fangs could not detain the Prince who has “*life in himself*;” and in his strength thou shalt triumph, for the power of Christ is promised to rest upon thee! He has had the same entrance; his footsteps marked the way, and his cry to thee is, “*Follow thou me.*” “My sheep,” says he, “hear my voice, and they do follow me;” they follow me gladly, even into this gloomy vale; and what is the consequence? “They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

3. It is ministered unto you *abundantly*. Perhaps the apostle means that the death of some is distinguished by indulgences and honours not vouchsafed to all. In the expe-

rience of some, the passage appears difficult ; in others it is comparatively easy ; they gently fall asleep in Jesus.—But we not only see diversities in the mortal agony—this would be a small thing. * * * Some get in with sails full spread and carrying a rich cargo indeed, while others arrive barely on a single plank. Some, who have long had their conversation in heaven, are anxious to be wafted into the celestial haven ; while others, who never sought God till alarmed at the speedy approach of death, have little confidence,

“ And linger shivering on the brink,
And fear to launch away.”

This doctrine must have been peculiarly encouraging to the early converts to whom St. Peter wrote. From the tenour of both his epistles it is clear that they were in a state of severe suffering, and in great danger of apostatizing through fear of persecution. He reminds them that if they hold fast their profession, an *abundant* entrance will be ministered unto them. The death of the martyr is far more glorious than that of the Christian who concealed his profession through fear of man. Witness the case of Stephen : he was not ashamed of being a witness for Jesus in the face of the violent death which awaited him, and which crushed the tabernacle of his devoted spirit ; his Lord reserved the highest display of his love and of his glory for that awful hour ! “ Behold !” says he to his enemies while gnashing on him with their teeth, “ behold ! I see heaven opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God :” then, in the full triumph of faith, he cries out, “ Lord Jesus ! receive my spirit !”

But did these things apply merely to the believers to whom St. Peter originally wrote ? No ; you are the men to whom they equally apply—according to your walk and profession of that Gospel will be the entrance which will be ministered unto you. Some of you have heard in another of our houses during the past week the dangerous tendency of the spirit of fear, the fear of man. I would you had all heard that discourse ; alas ! many who have a name and a place among us are becoming mere Sabbath-day worshippers in the courts of the Lord, and lightly esteem the daily means

of grace. I believe this is one cause at least why many are weak and sickly among us in Divine things. The inner man does not make due increase; the world is stealing a march unawares upon us: may God revive among us the spirit of our fathers.

These things, then, I say, equally apply to you. Behold the strait, the royal, the king's highway! Are you afraid of the reproach of Christ?

“Ashamed of Jesus, that dear friend,
On whom your hopes of heaven depend?”

How soon would the world be overcome if all who profess that faith were faithful to it! Wo to the rebellious children who compromise truth with the world, and in effect deny their Lord and Master!—Who hath required this at their hands? Do they not follow with the crowd who cry “Lord! Lord! and yet do not the things which he says.” Will they have the adoption and the glory? Will they aim at the honour implied in these words, “Ye are my witnesses.” Will *ye* indeed be sons? then see the path wherein his footsteps shine! The way is open! see that ye walk therein! The false apostles, the deceitful workers, shall have their reward; the same that those of old had, the praise and esteem of men; while the faith of those who truly call him Father and Lord, and who walk in the light as he is in the light, who submit, like him and his true followers, to be counted as “the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things,” shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory!

The true Christian does not seek to hide himself in a corner; he lets his light shine before men, whether they will receive it or not; and thereby is his Father glorified. [Having thus served his generation, by the will of God the hour of his departure at length arrives.] Then angels beckon him away; Jesus bids him come; and as he departs this life he looks back with a heavenly smile on surviving friends, and is enabled to say, “Whither I go ye know, and the way **ye** know.” An entrance is ministered unto him abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of his Lord and Saviour.

III. Having considered the state to which we look, and the mode of our admission, let us consider the condition of

it. This is implied in the word “*So.*” For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you. In the preceding part of this chapter, the apostle has pointed out the meaning of this expression, and in the text merely sums it all up in that short mode of expression.

The first condition he shows to the obtaining like precious faith with him, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Not a faith which merely assents to the truth of the Gospel record, but a faith which applies the merits of the death of Christ to expiate *my* individual guilt; which lays hold on him as *my* sacrifice, and produces, in its exercise, peace with God, a knowledge of the Divine favour—a sense of sins forgiven, and a full certainty arising from a Divine impression on the heart made by the Spirit of God, that I am accepted in the beloved and made a child of God!

If those who profess the Gospel of Christ were but half as zealous in seeking after this enjoyment as they are in discovering creaturely objections to its attainment, it would be enjoyed by thousands who at present know nothing of its happy reality. Such persons, unfortunately for themselves, employ much more assiduity in searching a vocabulary to find out epithets of reproach to attach to those who maintain the doctrine, than in searching that volume which declares that “If you are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father,” and “that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.” In whatever light the scorner may view this doctrine now, a time will come when, being found without the wedding-garment, he will be cast into outer darkness. * * *

O sinner! cry to God this day to convince thee of thy need of this salvation, and then thou wilt be in a condition to receive it.

“Shalt know, shalt feel thy sins forgiven,
Bless'd with this antepast of heaven.”

But, besides this, the apostle requires that we then henceforth preserve consciences void of offence towards God and towards man. This faith which obtains the forgiveness of

sin unites to Christ, and by this union we are made, as St. Peter declares, “partakers of the Divine nature:” and as he who has called you is holy, so you are to be holy in all manner of conversation. For yours is a faith which not only casts out sin, but purifies the heart—the conscience having been once purged by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, you are not to suffer guilt to be again contracted; for the salvation of Christ is not only from the penalty, but from the very stain of sin; not only from its guilt, but from its pollution; not only from its condemnation, but from its very inbeing: “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;” and “For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” You are therefore required by St. Peter “to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust,” and thus to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord!

Finally, live in progressive and practical Godliness. Not only possess, but practise the virtues of religion; not only practise, but increase therein, abounding in the work of the Lord! Lead up hand in hand in the same delightful chorus all the graces which adorn the Christian character; having the Divine nature, possessing a new and living principle, let diligent exercise reduce it to practical holiness, and you will be easily discerned from those formal hypocrites whose faith and religion are but a barren and unfruitful speculation.

To conclude: live *to* God—live *for* God—live *in* God; and let your moderation be known unto all men—the Lord is at hand: “Therefore, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.”

SERMON XXXVIII.

A CHRISTIAN FEAST.

PREACHED AT EASTER FESTIVAL.

Luke, xiv., 13-14.—When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind : and thou shalt be blessed ; for they cannot recompense thee : for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

To our thanksgivings for the resurrection of Christ we should unite the performance of such works as shall have recompense at the resurrection of the just.—In our text, also, the resurrection and charity are joined. * *

* * * * *

Narrate the history of these words.—Our Lord had been reflected on for eating with publicans.—Now he accepts the invitation of one of the chief Pharisees—they watched him—the bait likely to take was healing a dropsy—but it was the Sabbath. Jesus asked them, “Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath-day ?” but they could not answer him. * * * *

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Now, though they had spoiled the grace of the entertainment by making his table a snare, &c., yet he would turn it to a spiritual entertainment ; not forbidding their feasts, but regulating them. When he marked how “they chose out the chief rooms,” he took occasion to inculcate a lesson of humility : “When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room ; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him ; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place : and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room ; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher : then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit

at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

Having preached *humility*, he goes on to show a still more excellent way—*charity*. Observing the guests to be *friends*, *relatives*, and *rich neighbours*, he tells his host (not forbidding this mutual kindness between relatives, but reminding him that there may be no virtue, no charity in this), instead of the *rich*, call the *poor*; instead of *kindred*, call the needy *strangers*; instead of *friends* and *neighbours* who do not need a meal from thee, and can afford thee as good cheer in return—instead of these, “call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind;” such as cannot repay thee! That is hospitality of the noblest kind: it is perfect charity, and shall be “recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”

(To-morrow is the feast-day of “Thanksgiving,” and this evening is the preparation. “Provide those things necessary, and give something to the poor.” (The first you have already done.) See how our Lord again connects these two things in the text.—But have I said this in reference to to-morrow? To-morrow is not thine! “What thou doest, do quickly.”)

I. A general precept for almsdeeds: “A charge to them, that are rich”—spoken to all through the Master of the house.

II. The precept is mixed with counsel and advice as to the manner, measure, rules of proportion, and decency in alms—with our own hands, diligently, cheerfully, plentifully—*openly* sometimes, *secretly* at others—and with condescending kindness; such good nature as is implied in, “When thou makest a feast,” &c.

III. The objects—the poor indeed—the really helpless.

IV. The inducement and motive: “*At the resurrection of the just.*”

I. A general precept for almsdeeds.

The providence of God expects that you shall look from your high and slippery places on those who, lying at your

feet, can fall no lower. So varied are God's dispensations, that "many a hired servant in our Father's house has bread enough, and to spare," while many a son, and he not always a prodigal, is ready to perish with hunger. And though David "never saw the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging their bread," yet many are very abject; for an equality of condition can never be expected in this *world*: "The poor shall never cease out of the land." God has herein provided you, I will not say with hewers of wood, but with means of spiritual improvement; for, "Whosoever ye will, ye may do them good." Yet a little while, and many of these Lazaruses will be received into the heavenly mansion, though here "no man cared for their souls." If the beggar act his part well on this great stage, he shall go off with as loud a plaudit as Lazarus; and if the poor be not the *pious* man, yet God makes us his instruments of relief.

Nor is this left to our choice; it is a command: "*Charge* them that are rich in this world that they be ready to give, glad to distribute; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

Hence among the Jews the form of asking relief was, "Give me, as God has appointed or bidden you to do." Although it may not mean we are to do this *at all times*, yet it means much.

First. Our Lord would have us get the *habit* of charity; and this can only be attained by frequent acts of benevolence. If we give not willingly, constantly, or, at least, very frequently, we have still to learn and seek this *habit of charity*; for a *habit* is when we have gained the point upon ourselves, to work as we ought with little or no difficulty.

Secondly. Some extraordinary object of compassion may lie so heavily on the conscience, as to destroy the vital principle of grace if we turn our face away from its call. The priest and Levite were both condemned by Jesus, as if they had been accessories in killing the wounded man: nay, *principals* also.

Thirdly. A vehement *affectuous* setting the heart on earth is a state of sin and death; and though conscience may

plead *not guilty* to any gross wickedness, yet it is adjudged that, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also!" What is enough, then, to bestow, if there be danger in doing little? *All* you can spare from your own requirements? That will not advance us one step; it is only raising another objection. What is a superabundance to some is scarcely a competence to others in different circumstances. No bounds can be assigned. * * * Christian prudence; that is, well-guided piety or conscience wisely directed. Paul goes not much farther: he would have set times for *pious* uses, and these so near together as to keep the trade of charity active. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." When he comes to specify the sum, he says not one tenth or one twentieth, but "as God hath prospered you."

If it should be said this duty is so ill defined that it is difficult to know when our righteousness exceeds that of those who "shall by no means enter into the kingdom," instead of disputing, fall to practising and abounding in the work of the Lord; this is to take the safe and high way to heaven.*

II. The precept is mixed with counsel and advice as to the manner, measure, rules of proportion, and decency in alms, &c.

This differs much from that other saying, "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." But it is plain that this was never proposed by Christ to but one, and his case was singular.—Our Lord saw that he was as worldly as he was wealthy, and that it was necessary for his *salvation* to part him and his great possessions. Good amends would have been made him—the privilege of becoming a peculiar follower of Jesus, and, perhaps, the power of working miracles. But the generality of mankind are left free. He who lied to the Holy Ghost was told, "The land was in thine own power." And of those who sold all it was said, "Great grace was on them all."

In the text our Lord does not limit the Pharisee in this matter, but implies that it is lawful for him to keep so much

* Trapp, on "Charge them," &c.

as would leave him in a condition of sometimes making a feast. I impose not on you the *Formian* law, which permitted the citizens of Rome, in the most flourishing state of their empire, to spend no more than a certain sum at a feast; or the *Sempronian* law, which allowed no more for a marriage feast than would amount to a crown of the sun in the modern coin. But though it is not said, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther"—for abundantly enough and to spare is allowed at a feast, as may be inferred from our Lord's own practice when He treated the multitude, and "they gathered up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full"—yet there is danger when the rich only feast one another; else the caution, "When thou shalt have eaten, and art full, then beware lest thou forget the Lord," never would have been given.—None are less likely to remember God than those who lie down upon beds of ivory. The first great festival we read of was when "Abraham made a great feast, the same day that Isaac was weaned"—no better man—no juster occasion—for it arose from gratitude to God—yet it ended in Abraham's sorrow and Ishmael's banishment.

If God declared by the prophet Isaiah that he was displeased with the *fasts* of the Jews because they did not join alms with them, much more our *feasts*. Our Saviour indicates the way: "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind;" that is, make one sometimes on purpose to solace and relieve them. We have here implied,

1. A seasonable advice to those who have not the generosity *to give*, so long as they have the power *to keep* anything, but talk of bequeathing much when it is no longer their own; thus tempting others to pray for their death.

Jesus would have us do this before there is nothing left for us to do but to *feast* the worms. It is safer to *have* given without power of revocation—(Mrs. Graham gave one tenth)—safer to distribute with your own hands than to trust to others—greater consolation to see the effects with your own eyes. "*Grow not weary:*" this implies always labouring at it—this is sowing—and sowing *plentifully*—it is *lay-*

ing up “treasure where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal.” Send it *before!*

2. A carefulness for the poor—a double diligence; first to find them out and invite them, then to receive and refresh them. This is so far from “turning away the face from the poor man,” that it is rather travelling in quest of him: this is “*considering* the poor and needy”—laying out our thoughts upon them—sending out messengers as did old Tobit: “And when I saw abundance of meat,” says he, “I said to my son, Go and bring what poor man soever thou shalt find out, of our brethren, who is mindful of the Lord.” (Tobit, ii., 2.)

3. To *feast* them means to relieve them *plentifully*—“to *satisfy* the soul of the hungry”—not a *miser’s* feast.

4. Again, if this cannot be done without some noise, endure it. Piety is at the present day driven into a corner, and charity has become a pusillanimous, a blushing thing.—“Let your light so shine before men that they may *see* your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.” All good works that *are seen of men* are not, *therefore*, displeasing to God, but such whose *motive* only was this. Finally, relieve them from this motive: *they are the brethren of Christ*. Show a cheerful countenance towards them, for “God loveth a cheerful giver.” * * *

III. The objects of our charity.

This leads to a caution: the fit objects of charity are *the poor indeed*. We should not countenance idleness; relief to such should be in the way of good counsel.—If this is lost, compulsion. “If any man will not work, neither let him eat.”

I commend those who have erected workhouses to furnish them with employ; but, above all, the hospitals, dispensaries, orphan-houses, &c.

Such poor as these our Saviour recommends; such as these are the wealth of a Christian corporation. When a cruel and covetous tyrant demanded of St. Lawrence the gold and silver arising from the *great oblations* of the altar where he ministered, he mustered up a vast number of poor

saints, some without eyes, some whose arms were withered, others decrepit with age, or who had lost the use of their feet, and ranging all these miserable persons so that the Governor might have a full view of them: "Behold!" said he, "these are the church's hidden treasures!"

IV. The inducement: "Thou shalt be recompensed at the *resurrection of the just.*"

So much greater the reward, the longer it is in coming. "They cannot recompense thee," but He that assuredly can infallibly will. This is placing charity on good security.—Savings' bank.—So the longer it is in, the better. Not that the charitable man goes without a blessing in this life. *Job*—"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me." The poor have a special prerogative from God *to bless*; and rich as *Job* was, he was highly pleased to receive their benedictions.

Value them: their curse, too, is formidable—"Turn not away thine eye from the poor man when he crieth." Strange that an imprecation should be called a prayer! Such a prayer as is *turned into sin* upon him that puts it up, yet received by God as a petition or charge against him that provokes or extorts it.

But see the blessings of him that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble—*even in this world!*

But the strongest motive is in the text—the *resurrection*. Not *merit* Heaven—even martyrdom cannot be weighty enough to deserve an eternal weight of glory—as Paul reckoned.

Yet as "our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are unseen;" *so*, the doing good here, from Christian motives, will certainly *obtain*, though not *merit*, an abundant recompense.

It is a stoical, or rather a chymical, an empirical divinity that, by making virtue its own reward, prepares a great solvent to annihilate virtue itself. "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble

you," &c. (and, since every poor man is not comforted, &c., 'tis an argument for a day of recompense). "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous!" And this argument of the resurrection, were charity never so cold, is enough to raise it from the *dead*. If I *heartily believe* it, then let me act accordingly. "Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness," &c.—This is the argument our Saviour uses. * * * * *

SERMON XXXIX.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

A CHARITY SERMON.

Matthew, xxii., 39.—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

WHEN religion degenerates then arise disputes on non-essential matters. So the Jews, instead of setting themselves to do the commandments, inquire which is the greatest. Some thought the law of sacrifices, some circumcision, others the Sabbath—and others the law of meats and washing. When this famous question is proposed to Jesus, he answers, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Although there are certain duties which belong to ourselves, they are such as arise out of these. On this occasion I shall,

- I. Explain the second command.
- II. Enforce it.

I. Explain, &c.

1. Who is my neighbour?

This, too, was once proposed to Jesus. It is well for the world that he decided it.

(1.) Some regulate their charities by *local habitation*: for a *stranger*, or one afar off, they have no compassion. Ye

nutshells of charity, go to the good Samaritan, and learn that want of assistance is neighbourhood enough for him who loves another as himself.

(2.) Some have a *law of relationship*. "What! assist the heathen while I have poor relations?" Yes; perhaps the Samaritan had such also, for few persons have not; yet he gave; and Jesus says, "Go thou and do likewise."

(3.) Others confine charity to *their own nation*. Not so the good Samaritan! he saw in his *fellow-man*, whoever he might be, his brother and neighbour.

(4.) Others to the same *religious profession*. Go to the catholic Samaritan! whatever his creed, his heart was better than it.

(5.) Many think themselves justified in excluding *enemies*. The Jews understood the word neighbour to signify "thy *friend*." "Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but *I* say unto you, love your enemies."—See the Samaritan: his enemy (the Jews and Samaritans regarded each other as enemies) was perishing—and here is the trial, yea, the triumph of his benevolence. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink."—The priest and the Levite!! * * *

(6.) The last rule of exclusion is that which relates to *character*. "Ah! poor man, striped, wounded, and just ready to expire! but, before I relieve you, I must know who and what you are; whether industrious, sober, frugal, deserving." Alas! while you inquire, the sufferer is beyond your reach! * * * True, in some cases, to prevent fraud, investigation is proper; but, in those of *real* and *urgent calamity*, the love of our neighbour requires no other recommendation than want and affliction. Even if notoriously *vile*, there is no plea for neglect: benevolence, under these circumstances, may often gain their souls!

Is the inquiry still urged, "Who is my neighbour?" Every human being, without exception. "As ye have opportunity, do good unto all men." See how this interpretation is illustrated in Scripture: "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and

persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” God our Saviour tasted death for every man—he preached to his murderers. * * * *

If redeeming love made the exclusions we make, where should we be? In hell; or, if in the *world*, without God and without hope. “Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.” I am not, however, recommending promiseous and undistinguishing love, though we should have hearts and purses always ready for *special* and extraordinary cases. The *general* rule is, that our kindred take precedence of strangers, and that the household of faith be placed before the children of the wicked one. Christianity makes *distinctions*, but no *exclusions*. With these distinctions, every man is your neighbour, and you are bound to fulfil towards him the duties of love.

2. What is my duty to my neighbour? It includes, (1) The dispositions we are to cultivate and the conduct we are to observe towards him in all the intercourse and transactions of ordinary life. The thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians admirably states these: “Charity suffereth *long*”—not for a *time*, but a *long time*—to the end; “is kind;” “vaunteth not itself;” does not act *rashly*; is not violent, headstrong, precipitate; “is not puffed up;” humbles us in the dust, and prefers others; “doth not behave itself unseemly;” is not rude or willingly offensive; “seeketh not her own” *only*, but the good of *all*; “is not easily provoked;” but *easily* is not in the original—love is not provokable; “thinketh no evil;” neither thinks nor infers where none appears; “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;” has no pleasure in the misfortunes or crimes of an adversary; “beareth all things;” covers, as far as truth and a good conscience will allow, all failings and faults; “believeth all things,” or, where it cannot believe, *hopes* for extenuation; and, where there is no excuse, hopes God will give repentance; finally, “endures all things.”

It includes (2), as already remarked, the benevolence we are to exercise towards our neighbour in *distress*; because

then he is more particularly the object of regard and affection.

If the text were more obeyed there would be far less evil in the world; it would be either removed or assuaged. How much might be done by *sympathy*, [though actual relief were out of our power.] “Weep with those that weep.” How much by *appropriate advice* and *soothing conversation*; perhaps the sufferer’s mind is depressed so as to paralyze his energies. How much by the *communication of temporal supplies*, in measure to be restrained only by the want of means. These might sometimes be by gift or loan. Both are enjoined. “Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.” No measure can be prescribed to love, but prudence will suggest. These rules also apply to those who can interest others, though they have not much means of their own.

(3.) *The endeavours we ought to make for the salvation of the soul.* In this few can lay their hand on their heart and say, “As I have had opportunity, I have done good to all.” Perhaps we have not *prayed* for our fellow-men, and yet no duty costs us less. “I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, giving of thanks be made for *all* men.” Some of you have done this; but have you also furnished them with *religious instruction*? Have you given *personal exhortation*, and invited them to the house of God; furnished them with Bibles, tracts, books? If your zeal has carried you thus far, have you had *self-denial* enough to reprove them for their sins? Neglect here is almost *universal*. Do you remember that for this neglect God considers you as *hating* your neighbour? “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in any wise: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.” O! let the time past suffice. There are other occasions of serving their *eternal* concerns by *temporal* means, but these are brought before you on our missionary and other occasions.

3. What is the measure of duty to your neighbour? “To love him as *yourself*.” Self-love is thus *lawful* and *excellent*, and even *necessary*. It is not the disposition which leads unregenerate man to gratify vicious appetites and passions.

This is rather self-hatred. Nor that which leads us to grasp at all advantages, regardless of the consequences to others. This is selfishness. But that principle which is inseparable from our *being*; by which we are led to promote our own happiness, by avoiding evil and acquiring the greatest possible amount of good. This is the measure for our neighbour. While avoiding everything that would injure him in body, family, property, reputation, seek to do him all the good you can, and do it in the way in which you would promote your own welfare.

Now, how does a man love himself? 1. *Tenderly and affectionately*. Then so love your neighbour. While helping him, never show sourness of countenance or use asperity of language. The *pity* that is *affected* consoles almost as much as the *bounty*. Your succour purchases no right to insult or reproach him. See Jesus: though often surrounded by the vile, the most reproachful saying from his lips was, "Go and sin no more."

2. *Sincerely and ardently*. This will make him prompt and diligent, in everything he thinks, for his good. "Say not unto him, go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee." To-morrow? he may be *dead*, or change of circumstances may put it out of your power to benefit him, and thus the opportunity may be entirely lost. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." The time is short. Our opportunities for *doing*, as for *getting*, good are precarious. Now is the accepted time. * *

3. *Patiently and perseveringly*. So if we do not succeed by one means we try another, keeping on to life's end.—So do for your neighbour. Be not surprised if for good evil is sometimes received.—Expect, in some cases, to meet with ingratitude: in others bounty will be abused; and some, especially *spiritual*, rejected and despised. But, if this oblige you to change the stream of your benevolence, let it flow in *another* channel; see that it is not *interrupted*. Consider how *varied* the means which God employed with you, and consider Jesus with the Jews, after they had put him to death. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the even-

ing withhold not thy hand." "Be not weary in well-doing."

Having thus explained the text, let us,

II. Enforce it. In doing this, we make our appeal,

1. *To authority.* *His*, who is Lord of all. *Such*, all are bound to obey Him who gave us being and opportunity of complying with his will, and *means* of doing so—and who can terminate that being, and require us at any moment to give up our accounts. If you are *Christians*, and sincerely say, "What wouldst thou have me to do in reference to my neighbour?" this will have authority, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law. * * *

2. *To example.* Example is of two kinds. First. Those we are bound to imitate: these are strictly *patterns* for us. Secondly. Those which, though we are not obliged to follow, yet, for their excellence, are *worthy* of imitation. Of the first kind is our Lord. The epitome of his life is, "He went about doing good." Have the same mind, *disposition*, in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. See his zeal for the soul's salvation, and compassion for its miseries—give ye them to eat. Behold him at the grave of Lazarus.—He wept over Jerusalem; and hear him on the cross: "Father, forgive them!" We do not say you can equal him.—Stop—do I forget myself? "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." If Christian benevolence require us to hazard our lives, we should do so. The first Christians did this; their charity is proverbial; their example is worthy of being copied—that of Jesus is *obligatory*.

3. To the *connexion* and *dependance* which subsist *between us* and our *neighbour*. We are parts of one and the same body, and each is expected to contribute to the *general good*. Who, from the king to the beggar, stands alone, or is independent of others? He who acts solely in reference to *self* forfeits the character of *man*, and should be expelled from society.

4. *How much present pleasure arises from the exercise of this duty!* Who envies him that does not "rejoice with them

that rejoice, and weep with them that weep?" It is *delicious*, God-like pleasure—the *perfection* of delight! "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me." This is present *pleasure*; and have we not present *advantage* too? Is not charity a gain? Return here is often a hundred fold.—Then, as your success increases, increase your charities—prosper for *others*; then you have the secret of engaging God in your concerns; he will bless and multiply the substance in which there is a portion set apart for his afflicted members.

5. *Advert to the future recompense of benevolence.*—
 "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 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 an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 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 athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in pris-

on, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." What condescension in Jesus [thus to acknowledge the kindness shown to the least of his followers as done to himself]; what stupidity in us to need urging. I will not read the sentence of the others; I hope better things of you. Hereafter be *habitually* disposed to do good to your neighbour. The eye of the judge is upon you. "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

In order that nothing material may be omitted that should be attended to on this general subject of love to man, I add, in conclusion, two observations.

1. The love of our neighbour originates in, and is always connected with, the love of God. Moralists may write prettily, but a Christian minister treats the subject not as a *moral virtue*, but as a *Christian grace*. His business is to place it on the *true foundation*—the love of God. In no Gospel, scriptural, Christian sense, is it said you love your neighbour, if you do not first love God. You may do much to relieve man, but the Bible looks not for *actions* merely, but for *principles*—and these determine the action to be right or wrong. Though it is hard to say too much on the love of our neighbour, yet remember it is but the *second* commandment; *one* law goes before it—the *first* and *greatest*.—May it be written on your hearts! Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law. * * * *

2. That benevolence must not infringe upon justice. No man should give in alms what belongs to creditors. This is an act of injustice under the cloak of mercy. Owe no man anything but what you can pay; justice goes before acts of generosity and mercy. (Urge the present charity.) * * * That you may give the more.—

Put a guard on your expenses. Do not confound stations. The rich are not to live as the poor *must* live. God giveth us all things "richly to *enjoy*;" yet think of the naked, the famished, and cut off superfluities; minister less to personal enjoyment.

Devote some certain part of your income to God and the poor. Wesley's rule was, "Get all you can (honestly), save all you can, and give all you can." Reckon your givings in proportion to your incomes. I commend those who give one tenth, and *more* so those who give one fifth; but there is no specific rule, only to lay by as God has prospered you.

Let not your charities be too methodical. Though you may have stated pensioners, yet do not be callous to all others. Surely, *love* cannot be so regular as to make us masters of ourselves at all times. Oh no, it has its ardours and transports, &c.

Lastly, I remind you, that the most proper objects are often those who are least willing to make known their distresses. These are the *deserving poor*; they are *sought out* by this society: *you* cannot enter the garrets, &c., but these members will dispense your bounty.

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SERMON XL.

THE SECRETS OF MEN DISCLOSED AND JUDGED.

Romans, ii., 16.—In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

THREE topics.

- I. The person who is the Judge.
- II. The subject of investigation.
- III. The rule by which the process will be conducted.

I. The Judge.

Take up the subject as a matter of pure revelation. * * * * *

* * * * *

II. The subject of investigation.

The angel with his uplifted hand swearing by Him that liveth forever and ever that time shall be no longer—the trump of God sounded—every receptacle of mortality thrown open—the Son of Man manifested in his glory—the sun become black before him—while he descends from heaven with a shout. * * * * *

What more awfully grand! What a contrast between the former humiliation of Jesus and this his exaltation! Before him all shall be gathered. What a spectacle! And for what assembled? To swell a pageant? No; some as witnesses, some as criminals, some as rejoicing spirits, others as executioners; all a personal part.

“*The secrets of men.*” No distinction. The kings of the earth on a level with their meanest subjects!—Opulence no longer powerful—poverty no longer obscure; rich and poor meet together.—The judge cannot be perverted by bribes nor dazzled by rank. * * * *

“*The secrets of men.*” What a development! We are not to bend this term to our accommodation! *All* the secrets shall then be brought up.—We enumerate four classes of secrets.

1. Secrets of *conduct*. All those actions done under the cover of secrecy, and only known to God, angels, devils, and our consciences; those actions we concealed from *friendship* and from *man*—proclaimed on the housetop, &c. O how many secrets are *now* in progress in the world! Secrets of *ambition*, where the man is sacrificing all for it. Secrets of *covetousness*; call them secrets of trade, if you like, but O! there are many practices countenanced with them which cannot bear the light. How have you held back from the widow, and passed by the orphan, &c.

Secrets of *sensuality*.—In darkness—not to be named in public. Look in your closets; how have your consciences been contaminated. Secrets of *envy*: I cannot go into your closets; but what has God seen there! (Styles’s *Mysterious Stranger*.) This is not declamation. Such a stranger has been with thee, and in the day of judgment thou shalt find it to have been the Judge.

2. Secrets of *character*. Character is formed by principle, it is that which originates conduct. Now this can only be known to Him who searches the heart. I know not the springs of your conduct, nor the principles on which your character is formed. Though Jesus says we may know the tree by the fruit, yet there is not always a faithful correspondence between principles and practice. How few seek

only the glory of God, &c. I appeal to the heart. O! *Self* is a subtle principle. In private a man will blush at his own hypocrisy; and Satan, helping him, may make him a self-deceiver.

But every *motive* will then start up! How many actions *now* under the garb of humility, will *then* be seen to have originated in *pride*! How many blazoned deeds from self-love! How many actions, which seemed under the motive of zeal to God, like those of Jehu [to have been prompted by interest]!

3. Secrets of *inattention*. Those parts of our conduct which are secret by inattention—a large portion of our actions are thought to be venial, trifling, &c. “For every idle word which men shall speak they shall give account in the day of judgment.” Locke and the card-players. * * * Our conduct is also marked by that stranger. * * * O! act under these impressions!

4. Secrets of *influence*. We are members one of another. We are always, when in society, doing either good or harm. Little do we know how many are they whose morals we have poisoned! [or on whom we have in some way exerted an unhallowed influence]. In that day the author of blasphemous works will answer for *all* the evil he has done.

At the same time, I know many secrets of prayer will then be found—many tears, &c.—but I believe the term *secrets* is here used in a forensic sense.

Now this subject requires deep *self-examination*. O! what secrets will this night conceal! *Perhaps* some of *you* will commit sin to-night: “But remember, for all these things God will bring you into judgment.”

What will be the effects of this judgment? 1. The shame of exposure; and remember, *sin* is the subject of shame. No shame to be poor, sick, &c. What would you not give here to avoid exposure?—If exposed, perhaps you change your abode. 2. Besides shame, &c.—blush, &c.—the agony of remorse; and to this, 3. The horror of despair.—“Some shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt.”

III. The rule by which the process will be conducted

“When God shall judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel.” That is the Gospel I am commissioned to preach.

1. This process will demonstrate the equity of the judgment; for, if judged by works, no fallen creature could be justified. But “He that believeth not is condemned.” If my character meet not the requirements of the Gospel, I am justly condemned. And shall we not become acquainted with these requirements?—My ignorance of a statute law is no excuse.

2. It will cover the sinner with the speechlessness of condemnation. This is the agony of trouble. If he could only know that he is not the architect of his own prison-house, &c.—his own fire burns him. Now, has not the Gospel been fully preached to *you*? I have nothing to do with others. Has not the Holy Ghost striven and conscience warned? You *know* God would have saved you a hundred times. Now, at the tribunal of Christ what will you say? “I knew thee that thou wast a hard man, but I never knew that thou requirest repentance?” You know it *now*. “I would have repented, but had not moral strength: *I could not!*” Can you say this? Is not the Holy Ghost now striving? Ah! you will be speechless!—then bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness.

3. It cuts off the hope of farther mercy. There is but one plan of saving you. When the law cuts you down, you can fly to the Gospel; but when *this* is gone! “there remaineth only a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation”—“The *wrath* of the Lamb!” O! remember, you and your preachers are all hastening upward. * * * “We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.” But how? It may be with joy.

“The arms of love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace.”

Jesus now weeps—“O that thou wouldst know, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace, before they are forever hid from thine eyes!” Is he leaving this sanctuary with the mournful exclamation, “O that thou hadst *known*.” Alas! at midnight, perchance, death seizes upon

thee ; then thou wilt cry, yea, roar. But thou shalt hear a voice issuing from the throne, " I have called, and thou hast refused : now will I laugh at thy calamity, and mock when thy fear cometh." O ! come ; we are now at the *mercy-seat* ! And, Christians, be you watchful. " Cleanse thou me from secret faults."—" Then will an entrance be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

SERMON XLI.

THE BODY RAISED AND CHANGED.

Philippians, iii., 21.—Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

THESE words express the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead—the *dead body*—it is a peculiar doctrine, which never entered into the mind of man to conceive, that after the flesh was corrupted, it should rise again—it was only taught by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.—JOB.—The heathen had no knowledge of it ; hence they looked on the sepulchre as the cemetery in which all their hopes were interred, and sorrowed as without hope. But life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel ; it declares that Jesus Christ was and is the resurrection and the life.

To heighten the idea, the apostle refers to our present state—" *vile body*"—original, *humbled body* ! In many awful senses it is true.

1. Humbled by the fall. (Refer to the original state of man.) " In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"—it was humbled that day. * * * *

2. Humbled when God cut short the span of life.—See the patriarchs—but now how soon is the beautiful structure taken down.

3. Because of the labours to which it is subjected.

4. Because it is become the seat of sin—hence it is called *flesh* : " The flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit

against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Again, Paul: "I keep my *body* under and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a cast-away."

5. Because it is a clog to the soul: "We groan in this tabernacle."

6. Shall be humbled yet more by disease and death; to this all must submit.—

I. But the *resurrection of the body!* This is pure revelation—heathens knew it not. The wisdom of Greece is made foolishness!—See them at Athens: "When Paul spake of the resurrection, *they mocked.*"

1. To reveal the certainty of this doctrine was one of the designs of our Lord in many of the miracles he wrought—these were to impress the mind, &c. Select the *case of Lazarus*—it was to give some light on the resurrection.—Examine it.—

(1.) Raised by the immediate word of Christ: "*Lazarus, come forth!*" So it will be at the last. Christ shall speak from heaven!—Awful!—"Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment:" and "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Powerful word!

(2.) He was raised in the presence of the wicked Jews. * *

(3.) In his resurrection we see the reunion of a family, &c. So will it be at the last: no breach will then be existing—will be perfect and entire.

2. But see the subject of the resurrection of the body *with that of Christ's*—the resurrection of Christ's was greater than that of Lazarus—he gave life to himself. *In him was life*—this is greater than for a living body to give life to another. In vain did the grave close on him—he had said the Son of man *shall* rise again on the third day—in vain the Roman guards—the bands of iron, &c. It shows he had absolute power over death; like Lazarus he came forth and stood before his disciples.

3. Christ's was the first-fruits of them that rose—the first-fruits have been gathered, and Christ is now in heaven—

(See the first-fruits under the law.) The fact is indubitable—the wave-offering is now before the throne of God.

4. It gave a new turn to their phraseology—death is now called *sleep*.—Stephen *slept*; Jesus *slept*, and “They that *sleep* in Jesus will God bring with him.” It is not disappointing—it intimates that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

5. It was necessary for the full confirmation of Christ’s victory over his enemies. The Son will come forward on the great white throne! Him hath God appointed Judge of quick and dead. Every knee must bow to him—thousands have not yet done this.—Every persecutor, infidel, &c. (Sublime.) You who despise Jesus! Domitian may erect his throne against the Lord and his anointed, but they *shall* own him Lord of all! To him must every foe submit, &c.

Objection: That the body is to be made out of the common mass of matter. No: it is the *same* body; not indeed every particle, as the parings of nails—the cropping of hairs, &c.—but the *same* body.—The original of the word used to express it is “*stand up*”—resurrection. * * * If it were not the same body, there would be no similarity between Christ’s resurrection and ours.—Those who rose at the death of Christ.—This leads us to that change which passed on them in addition to the resurrection, viz., the transformation.

II. The transformation of the body: “Who shall *change* our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” The resurrection does not include this. Christ’s body was not glorious before his death, (nor) between his death and resurrection in the fulness of glory.

True, we see a great display of it on the Mount of Transfiguration—the glory shone out as through the pores of the flesh!—his raiment was glistening, &c. (describe). * * *

But his body was made fully glorious when he entered into the presence of his Father, and “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Of *that* glory we cannot conceive! Moses, powerful as he was in prayer, could not be heard when he said, “Show me thy glory.” (Sublime!) And he put him in the rock, covered him with his hand,

passed by, and proclaimed his name, and Moses saw the back parts, the *skirtings* of the Lord! It was quite as much as flesh and blood could bear (even though strengthened on purpose by the mighty power of God!)

1. Now, if our bodies are thus to be *changed* like Christ's glorious body, what are the inferences? (1.) No more death! "I am alive for evermore!"

"Say live forever, wondrous King,
Born to redeem and strong to save,
Then ask the monster, where's thy sting?
And where's thy victory, boasting grave!"

Courage then! (Not like Lucian!) The conflict is but *once*! Support it! You may sweat your last in the struggles; but, *once* over, the weary will be at rest! "There shall be no more death." Christ will put him under his feet! (Awful to the sinner. Thou, damned soul, shalt *desire* to die!—but in thy case too it shall have operation: "No more death!") O! the ecstatic feeling of the soul when entering heaven!—Never! never more to die! (Sublime!)

(2.) If changed like Christ's, then no more deformity—no infirmity—no mark of disease—*like Christ's*! The care of the body here is a great inconvenience; even the duties of religion are often neglected through the urgency of the body's claims; if we wish to pray, &c., we must drive the duties of religion into a *corner*, &c.—The *glorious body of Christ*!

"When he shall come to be glorified *in his saints*, and to be admired *in all them that believe* [because our testimony among you was believed] in that day." It is essential, then, that our body be like Christ's glorious body! Where shall we look for the glory of Christ? Is it in a burning world? Glorious—awfully so! Is it in the splendours of angelic choirs? No: there is not an adaptation in them, &c.—no body! But Christ glorified *in his saints*! (Sublime!) * *

(3.) If changed and fashioned like Christ's glorious body, then a more fit companion for the Spirit. Why cannot our spirits now bear aloft in the contemplation of the glories of the throne of God? (Why tired now of this ordinance?)

The flesh is weak, and the *inferior* principle binds down its superior. We begin to study—dive into the mysteries of God; but, when just beginning to know the alphabet, the infirmities of the body remind us that old age has arrived, and a stop is put to all! “We know but in part!” nay, the very pursuit of these things will itself bring on *premature* disease, and then death ends our ardent pursuits! *He* will not wait on Archimedes till he has finished, &c. We must lay all aside and die!

How little *enjoyment* or *good* also can *this* body bear? See Mount Tabor! They acknowledge “It is *good* to be here;” but they cannot bear it; a cloud is thrown over them, and as dust they are, to dust they return; the flesh is cast upon the ground; their spirit cannot contemplate it, and they must come from Tabor!—But see the glorious body!—*like Christ’s!*—’tis higher than an angel’s!—See his glorified humanity supporting his human soul! And yet in closest alliance with the Deity!—able to bear up under all the overwhelmings of glory, even in the human soul and body! We, then, “*heirs of God!*” (can only inherit his *blessings* here; *there himself!*)—joint with Jesus!—Then his last prayer will be fulfilled—fully answered, “That they all may be one; *as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us.*” Impossible to express the fullness of this! *One with Christ!!*

III. *How is this to be effected?* The apostle resolves all into the Divine power!—this is an answer to every objection. “How can these things be?” is the language of the blind man—“The *mouth* of the *Lord* hath spoken it!” (By that very power, O infidel! which will subdue thee to himself—perhaps thou thinkest that this will require a *mighty* power; yes, “but he is able,” &c.) How must every weak objection fall before this reply!—Many Christians will not take this high ground, but *fritter* away the power of God to *shreds* of glory only! and some will even bring Scripture to support the opinion contrary—as,

1. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” And they would form a new body then (this would be a *new creation*,

not a resurrection). True, not in the form of flesh and blood, but the same substance—a log of wood consumed, the particles remain (matter is indestructible)—and it will be modified.—God can vary the same matter in infinite variety, and this is Paul’s argument in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, though so often misunderstood.—Read from the 39th to the 44th verse—he shows here what different kinds of *flesh*, nay, of *matter*, he made from the same lump; and can he not vary thy flesh and blood, and yet preserve the identity of the parts?

2. On this plan of accommodation the *germe* system is founded—Rabbinical—and founded on the same mistaken chapter (1 Cor., xv., 35 to 38 v.). Paul is not describing the process of the resurrection—the analogy between the growing of wheat and *our* growth; but showing the various forms which the same matter is capable of undergoing, and yet preserving the identity of its substance. This system may be well termed *vegetation*, but not a *resurrection*.

3. Others, on the same system, say that the blending of bodies has been such that it is now impossible to have the same body; *we* have fed on other bodies; *many* on their own species; many have been devoured by beasts, &c.; all evaporated as in air, &c. But what of all this? Do not we see God daily upholding the works of his hands, and is *that* inferior to *this*? If we doubt the resurrection even yet, it is because we have low notions of the power of God! We think of him as of a man like ourselves! Does he not pervade all things? Is he not in the centre of the hardest rock as well as in the ambient air? and does he not know all the changes the bodies are undergoing, and whither every particle is removing? Are they not all under his eye? If all our members were written in this book when as yet they were *not* formed, can any of them escape him when they *are* formed? Believe in God’s superintendence.—Away with all such fears! Let the philosopher dispute about these things, and argue *unphilosophically*, &c.—the infidel deny, and the unbeliever doubt, the power of God, we take it on *his word*! There is in the mind of Deity the

idea of our resurrection-body, to which we shall be conformed by the "power wherewith he is able even to subdue all things to himself." Yes; we shall come forth; and our grave will be as our dressing-chamber, where we lay aside corruption with our grave clothes, and are clothed like unto Christ; ready for the bridegroom, prepared to be ushered into the presence of the Lamb.

Application.

1. Like the pillar that led the Israelites, it has a dark side for its enemies; while it assures us of a resurrection, it tells us it will be of the *unjust* as well as the just. Oh! sinner, the earth will spew thee forth; in vain thy marble tomb attempts to hide thee: the solid marble rends!—the body shall rise to receive according to the deeds done in the body! the instrument of sin shall be the instrument of suffering. Take the alarm! Be at peace with God.

2. It should mitigate our sorrows for departing friends; we mourn their loss; it is right to weep; to indulge the feelings of sympathetic sorrow (grace never conquers this nature). Jesus wept! But we sorrow not as those without hope! we meet again! we soon shall meet to part no more! The family bond will again be tied. I shall again meet my friend and rekindle my fire—for he is not dead, but sleepeth! Parents, &c., children, &c., you will know them again, and, flying to the mutual embrace, the language of Paradise will be heard, My child, my child! My father, my father!

3. It should comfort us in the prospect of *our* death; he will be with thee then; he will support thy head; be not alarmed; remember it is but putting off mortality; it is the passage *home*; heaven is my *home*!—he will not leave our soul in hell. * * * He will come and call us from the tomb, and the dead in Christ shall *rise first*; then, like Job, "O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and

I will answer thee : thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands.”—This refers to the time between death and the resurrection. “Wherefore comfort one another with these words,” &c., &c.

SERMON XLII.

THE EFFORTS AND SUPPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN.

Psalm lxiii., 8.—My soul followeth hard after thee ; thy right hand upholdeth me.

THE Hebrew here rendered *followeth hard after* signifies also to *cleave to*, &c.—Perhaps the Psalmist had the idea of a child at once exerting itself to *follow* and to *cleave to* its parent. How natural—picture a case : see the father—the child says, “Hold me by the hand ;” still it requires all his exertion to keep pace, &c.—But while he *hangs* on you, he is encouraged to proceed. He *followeth hard*, but your right hand *upholds and draws* him forward.

In applying these words to the experience of a child of God, consider,

- I. The efforts he makes.
- II. The assistance he receives.

I. The efforts he makes.

These efforts are directed to three principal points :

First. Obedience to the will of God. *Self-will* is the principle of action with the children of this world. But religion teaches to deny self. God’s will is the Christian’s chart and compass. “Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do ?”

But this obedience is distinguished by two features :

1. It will be spiritual. There will be purity in the motive, as well as rectitude in the act.

2. *Universal*.—Not like Saul, who spared Agag, but “having respect to *all* the commandments.”

Secondly. Constant exercise of faith in the promises

of God. The child of God feels his impotence and his need of him who is able to keep him from falling—he followeth hard!—often fears he shall be cast down. It would be endless to enumerate all the difficulties to be encountered.—“Many are the afflictions of the righteous,” &c.—often they are tried in the fire.—The accuser of the brethren perhaps obtains permission, as in Job’s case, to lay his hand on their property, their children, or their persons; nay, one in whom they trusted lifts up his heel against them. And do they feel no tendency to faint under these tribulations? no temptation to say, “All men are liars?” No danger in believing a lie of the enemy that “God has shut up his loving kindness in sore displeasure”—no difficulty in saying, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” O! it is a *narrow way*, a steep and difficult ascent.—There are moments in which we cry out, “My feet were almost gone, my steps had wellnigh slipped.” Yet we *follow hard after God*, and resemble Gideon and his little army, “faint, yet pursuing.”

Thirdly. The enjoyment of communion with God. This is a higher point of Christian experience!—the principal inducement to a child in following, &c.—does not merely originate in the influence of authority, or the fear of surrounding dangers, but from the expectation of that satisfaction and pleasure which is always found in the society and converse of a beloved object. The toil of exertion is sweetened, and the length of the way beguiled by a thousand pleasing inquiries—a thousand pleasing communications. The little traveller, as he runs by the side and holds the hand of his father, lifts up his voice for information and inclines his ear to instruction; and if it were not for the interest which this mutual intercourse gives to the journey, it would be, to the child at least, a dull and irksome toil. He would want a sufficient excitement to persist in the laborious effort; and beginning at first to follow afar off, would at length be tempted to measure back his steps to the place from whence he commenced his course.

So with the child of God. Communion with his heavenly Father is the most valued and exalted privilege. Divest re-

ligion of this, and it becomes a yoke grievous to be borne. We might, indeed, submit to it for a while in the spirit of bondage unto fear, but we should soon become faint and weary in our minds. And such is actually observed to be the case with those who substitute purposes of amendment, attempts at reformation, and forms of Godliness, in place of spiritual, experimental piety—these have no root in themselves. Religion has no hold upon their affections; it is not the source of their joy. They flee to it in a time of danger as a matter of necessity, not of choice; and when the danger seems in some degree subsided, they gradually return to the world; they endure for a while, and in a time of temptation fall away. Such are the desires they cherish, such the efforts they make.

II. The assistance he receives.

The inference is, as long as the people of God follow hard after, &c.

1. He will deliver their feet from falling, as the child upheld by the father—so feeling his dependance, he is strong in the Lord, &c.

If ever we fail, either there is a want of fervour in our endeavour, or of simplicity in our dependance. We either do not follow *hard* after, or do not *hang* upon him. I appeal to experience. When have your feet slipped? * * * On the other hand, when have you been most sensibly assisted?
* * * * *

Indeed, the Divine perfections preclude the possibility of any other result. It would be unnatural in one of you that is a father to withhold assistance from your child, while labouring to keep pace, &c.—so here.

But you say, We know all things are possible to him that believeth; but then my faith is liable to fail. * *

2. He will keep your faith from failing—"Thy right hand upholdeth me." David meant that he not only perfected his obedience, but maintained his confidence, by means of the grace of God assisting him. Indeed, our observance of the law is inseparably connected with our faith in the promise. The Christian's work is the work of faith; his walk is a walk of faith; his life is a life of faith. Faith,

as Samson's hair, is the principle wherein his great strength lieth; if shorn of this, he becomes weak like other men. Hence Satan lays his axe to this root of the tree; and how often has he who is able to succour them that are tempted helped us against our unbelief. What would have become of the faith of Jairus, if Jesus had not strengthened it by, "Fear not; believe only, and she shall be made whole."—What of the faith of Martha? What of the Psalmist's at the Providence of God, if he had not gone into the sanctuary? What of Peter's, if Jesus had not prayed that his faith might not fail?—and what of our own!—In fact, as in the child's case, our hold is so feeble, that if our heavenly Father did not grasp our hand in his, we should fall. Every stone of stumbling would trip us. Every danger would turn us back. Our nature tends to "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." We are only more than conquerors through him that loved us.

How much is implied in the encouragement to Paul at Corinth, "Fear not," &c. Paul might have departed, like Mark, from the work, if the right hand of Jesus had not upholden him.

So we "drink of the brook in the way; therefore do we lift up our heads."

3. He will preserve your hearts from fainting. And here is the cause of apostacy. Men do not follow hard after and hang upon God as the source of their delight; and, consequently, remaining strangers to joy and peace in believing, become weary of the comfortless and formal round of duties and restraints, till at last they altogether break the yoke from their necks. There is no stability in religion short of this experimental knowledge of the love of Jesus—it shall be in you "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."—Such have "bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and drink of the brook." so that in the days of famine they have enough. Yes, even under the loss of outward comforts they have inward refreshments, and say, "Though we walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive us: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of our enemies, and thy right hand shall

save us." "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Application.—What is the object of your pursuit? Is there any resemblance between you and the Psalmist? What is the bent of your desires, the tenor of your exertions? May the Spirit of God enable you, as in a glass, to discover your own character and conduct while I seriously press on you these propositions.

1. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh." Are there not some here who haste to rise up early and eat the bread of carefulness, in hope of saying ere long, "Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry?"

Or perhaps, free from care, you are like the thoughtless prodigal rather than the calculating fool; your course is marked not by industry and thrift, but waste and riot. To enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season is the end at which you aim.

But in whatsoever form the world may ensnare your affections, it will elude your grasp, and leave you the experimental knowledge that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Oh! begin to follow hard after God. * * * God will not disappoint your largest expectations. He promises to give you rest. Take hold of his strength and say, "Draw me, we will run after thee."

2. "They that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit." Are any aiming at a spiritual universal obedience? a more humble, simple, constant, and peaceful dependance? glad to withdraw from the avocations of business and the masquerade of worldly company to cultivate communion with Jesus?—"following hard after God?" "Fear not, worm Jacob! His right hand upholdeth thee." Be not discouraged because of the way. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" Whatever the difficulties of thy warfare, "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," and thou shalt eventually say, the right hand of the Lord hath the pre-eminence. The right hand of the Lord hath brought wondrous things to pass.

SERMON XLIII.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.

Galatians, vi., 2.—Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ

THE constitution of man in his natural state fully proves that he is a being created for social intercourse, and depending for happiness in a great degree on the society of his own species. God himself has also declared this; for no sooner did he produce this exquisite workmanship of the human frame, than he pronounces—"It is not good that man should be alone."

It is only the invention of man which would destroy this arrangement; but, under whatever pretences such persons may hide their plea for a contrary order of things, it is clear they violate the plain intention of God! Man was not made for a cloister; and though the garb of religion may attract his desires to become a recluse and shut himself up from the observation of his fellow-creatures, yet such a voluntary humiliation will not affect the balances in which he will be weighed at that day when God shall render to every man according to his works. If such do possess any light, why not let it shine forth before men, that others may be induced to glorify their Father who is in heaven? Such do actually eclipse that glory within them, if such they really have, and God is not honoured by them in the face of an ungodly world; he receives no glory from such; nor can he say to them, "Ye are my witnesses!"

All society, whether domestic, civil, or religious, has its origin in God; and these bonds which God has joined let no man put asunder!—

The benefits which arise to men by this conjunction are great beyond measure; even as it regards this world! for they are linked together by the bonds of the reciprocal relation of their nature and the ties of consanguinity; and however certain distinctions may exist among them, arising from

the various acts and orders of Providence, or from pedigree education, fortune, talents, different situations and spheres of action, yet the bonds of society are not thereby loosed; we are of the same species, and agree in far more important respects than those in which we differ! We are all the workmanship of the same hands, composed of the same materials, cast into the same form, copied from the same image, descended from the same common stock, inhabitants of the same world, the care of the same Providence, involved in the same calamities of the fall, and experiencing the same necessities. Herein we all resemble each other by nature; but far more striking are the features which grace imprints upon our minds: as those who belong to Christ, we are the purchase of the Saviour's blood, the objects of the same mercy, the subjects of the same grace, have the same duties to perform, the same enemies to encounter, the same faith to exercise, the same race to run, the same hope to animate us, and if by patient continuance in well doing, seek for the same glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life.

St. Paul improves this union in the text, and brings it into a practical application; for as Christians we stand in so near a relation to each other, that the relative duties thereby laid on us cannot be too impressively enforced.

I. The exhortation.

II. The reason of it, or motive to it.

I. The exhortation.

We speak here only of the burdens of the children of God! for to such the apostle speaks.

1. There may be a burden of *poverty*; it is often *their* case; not that this is the consequence of their religion; no, it ameliorates even our temporal condition. But not many rich are called, &c.; yet God often casts his children upon the richer of the brethren; they are often deprived not only of the comforts, but the *necessaries* of life. O! want of bread!—and believe me, pinching want is a *great affliction*.

2. There may be a burden of *sickness*; bodily affliction—health is a blessing *incalculably valuable*, and a blessing which they could well appreciate to whom nothing is given but the cup of sorrow, almost unmixed with any alleviation. This is not the *natural effect* of religion, for she sits as a beneficent and bountiful empress, “holding in her right hand length of days, and in her left hand riches and honours:” yet the body may often be “chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain.”

3. *Persecution*. This is no new thing; all who will live Godly must suffer it; nay, to some it is given to know how great things they must *suffer* for his name; “for to them it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to *suffer* for his sake.”

The least kind is reproach. The world spends the virulence of its tongue against the children of God; enthusiasm and madness are some of the epithets. * * * But a man’s greatest foes shall be they of his own household. See the parent who stifles religious impressions in the child; you were pleased with them when going on in all the gayeties of the world! * * * * *

4. *Temptation*. This is no new thing. The weak believer is much pressed at by the enemy, and perhaps so much so that there may be,

5. *Darkness of mind*; he may have given way to the adversary. This is, indeed, the peculiar meaning of the exhortation in the text, as in the first verse: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Mildness must be used on these occasions, and not austerity. * * * A man must not be forsaken of his brethren because he has slipped. * * * But how are we to bear each other’s burdens?

1. *Sympathize with them*. How strangely does sympathy relieve the sufferer! We are to weep with them that weep, for it lessens the affliction; and to rejoice with them that do rejoice, for it increases their joy; joy communicated increases the feeling of joy. Idle compliments may do among the worldly, but the child of God asks not in indifference

concerning his brother's welfare. He enters feelingly into his state, and is himself oppressed with the burden that weighs down his afflicted brother.

2. *Counsel them.* Faithful advice is often of the greatest use; a good counsellor is a suit half gained. * * *

* * * * *

3. *Relieve them.* In vain to counsel if not relieve.—Many give counsel because it costs nothing, but withhold relief.—How few Dorcases! good Samaritans! * * *

4. *Pray for them.* This is no small part of your duty; the faithful prayer availeth much. If our prayers for each other were not efficacious, we should not be so often required to pray for all men.—Many proofs are given of the efficacy of prayer on these occasions. The Church prayed for Peter, and he was given, *in answer to them*.—It is on this plan the sick send to be prayed for.—You should be spiritual priests, bearing on your hearts the names of those for whom you are interested, as the high-priest's ephod! * * *

II. The reasons of it, or motive to it. "This is the law of Christ."

1. It is the law of his *precepts*; the whole tenor of them is to love one another: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Nay, even to extend it to *enemies*: "If they hunger, feed them; if they thirst, give them drink."

2. It is the law of his *example*; he taught nothing but what he practised; as to his enemies, see him doing them good; healing the ear of Malchus, who came to take him; and on the cross—"Father, forgive them." But see his example towards his own, which is the pith of the exhortation; *poverty*—though he was poor indeed, he never ate his bread alone. * * * *Sickness*—see, in the case of Lazarus, how he sympathized! *Persecution*—see how he loved his disciples the more as he saw the approach of persecution. How he prayed for them to the last, and "loved them to the end." *Temptation*—Satan had desired to have some, but he had prayed for them; he counselled them: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."—*Darkness*—see

Peter's case. He did not cast him off because of this, but appeared to him *first*. Peter's case is an example to us with regard to all such as have been turned out of the way! Pray, run, plant the standard, invite the fugitive to rally round it: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

But again, how else can you prove yourselves the disciples of Christ? The grand motive to Christian benevolence is, *Christ died for me*—the conviction that *I* was a *sinner*. He *first* loved me; this is the strongest motive—and this is the rule by which he will judge the world: "I was an hungered," &c. O! how strong was this principle among the first disciples, that even Pliny could give no more striking account of this sect of the Nazarenes than this, that "They loved each other," &c., &c.

It might be shown that this law is practicable by St. Paul's example. He mourned with his brethren—was jealous over them—willing to bear bonds. Fornicator, &c.—Thus we give evidence that we are not Antinomians, though we have become followers of Christ.

	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Apply.—Visit the sick, &c.	*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*	*

SERMON XLIV.

MESSIAH'S PEACEFUL REIGN.

A MISSIONARY DISCOURSE.

Isaiah, xi., 9.—They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

WHO would not desire it? Who would not pray, "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles." Do we imagine that this world is to be ever the seat of fraud and violence—always a moral chaos, &c. * * * and that no Almighty Spirit will ever brood over the deep abyss—no voice, "Let there be light!" No atmosphere of love

stretched over it? Will the Almighty never again say "All is good?" Revelation brings the prospect near, when we ascend the hill and see all subjected to Jesus. The whole passage before us shows it. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." Then what a change produced.—"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." How is the prophets harp strung to heavenly strains! God's will shall be done on earth even as it is in heaven!

I. Contemplate the pacific spirit that shall be in the world in Messiah's reign.

II. The cause of its universal prevalence.

I. The pacific spirit, &c.

It refers to *this* period; and when all the Messiah's mediatorial purposes are finished it shall take place in its fulness. Where? In all his holy *mountain*. The figure has allusion to Sinai. Zion under the Gospel is Sinai under the law—

God's universal Church—" *holy mountain,*" to show the purity, &c. See what the prophet says in chapter ii. : " And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills ; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths ; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people : and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Now, it is in the Church of God that this prediction is to be accomplished—and it shall be extended over all the earth. Now, the effect of this will be, " They shall neither hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."—This prediction shall be accomplished when,

1. There are no mutual antipathies. How is it that man is a wolf to man ?—this was not so from the beginning—sin !—this is the cause ; and hence man's history is always one of mourning, and lamentation, and wo !—See it in domestic—national, &c.—When man became the enemy of God he became the enemy of himself ; and it is only by restoring him that the basis for fellowship between man and man will be
 * * * Human laws may bind and assist, but the enmity can only be effectually subdued by the grace of the Gospel. * * * Civilization follows Christianity. * * * Antipathies arise from the opposing passions of human nature and the various standards of morals and opinions.—But when the Gospel is *universal*, " they shall *neither hurt nor destroy.*"
 * * * The passions shall be restrained and governed by the Gospel, and the laws of civil society in accordance with this * * * and " their kings shall be nursing fathers, and their queens shall be nursing mothers." All erroneous principles shall be then suppressed, not by force, but by the outpouring of the Spirit ; and then our Lord's prayer will be answered—" *we all one.*"

2. It shall be displayed in the activity of genuine benevolence. Religion is love; its origin was love!—the love of God!—“he so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.” It was prominent in Christ; and what was his last commandment? “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another”—and all the doctrines of his religion tend to it. How active, then, should the benevolence of the Gospel be!

3. This spirit will show itself in true *Christian* fellowship. See the end of the second chapter of Acts: “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart”—the love of God the basis—earth the emblem of Heaven! Then, indeed, may we say, in the glowing language of an apostle, “But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

Your Church, then, is founded for this purpose. Figure to yourself a village—the *Lord's*!—the town catches the flame, &c. * * * Well, *this* shall be so: “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”—The revolution will be as great as the lion lying down with the lamb. It must, then, be effected by a change of nature—“*new creatures.*” * * * *

II. We notice the cause of the universal prevalence of the pacific spirit. Why do we believe it? “The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it”—“The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.” But let us notice,

1. The *knowledge* with which the world shall be filled.

Every kind of knowledge has not this effect. The philosopher has a right to talk—for knowledge is *power*—but the knowledge of literature and the arts will not change the antipathies of man; it will not eradicate the ravenous nature. “*The knowledge of the Lord*” can alone do this—the character of Jesus—the *mind of Christ*.—We have known learned men, yet ferocious (Tschoop); but “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

2. See the tendency of this knowledge to produce such results: we argue it from three topics:

First. It is the knowledge attained from Divine revelation: “As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”—It is quite *natural* for it to *accomplish* this.

Secondly. It is God’s instrument—He makes it the *power* unto salvation. Not that in itself it is so, but from *actual results*; it has been his *power* to salvation.

Thirdly. The certainty of *universal* diffusion. This we could only know by revelation; for though we might argue by the kind of means, yet, as these are only his revelations, the *end* is also necessary to be revealed. “There shall be a handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth”—“The kingdom of heaven is as a grain of mustard-seed, which is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

We rest our hopes, then, of this on the promises made to the fathers, &c., and on the promised agency of the Holy Spirit. * * * * *

Its important relation to us. * * * Have you obeyed

from your heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you * * * Every minister may say, "I am set for the fall and rising again of many." * * * To perish from under the cross is tremendous!

Interesting, then, to promote it among others.—Christians are a *confederacy*—general diffusion * * *

What do you not owe to the Gospel? What would you receive in exchange for it? Then give *liberally* for its diffusion. * * *
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SERMON XLV.

PAUL'S RESOLVE.

1 Corinthians, ii., 2.—For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

1. **WEIGHTY** causes must have conspired to make St. Paul utter so determined a resolution; for, he could be all things to all men, that he might save some. The Corinthian Church objected to the Gospel preached by *him*; not because he wanted refinement in delivery, &c., for he was versed in all this, &c.—they objected more to the *substance* than the *manner*; not that they were averse to being instructed in the principles of the faith, for they had teachers of it, but they wished Paul to mix with it *the wisdom of words, wordy wisdom*, which he calls "*the wisdom of the world.*" Abstruse themes which would lead to philosophical discussions, &c.

2. It seems Paul's practice was to dwell on the *atonement*; and this doctrine was incapable of embellishment—it was *too awful! too simple!* (Lomas.) Other preachers among them had accommodated their teachings to their views; but Paul did not—he is now in a dilemma, either to yield to their taste, or lose his *popularity*. With him there is no hesitancy; popularity is not the end of a preacher whose work is with the Lord: "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

3. The reason of this resolution was not self-will, but because he considered the preaching of *Jesus* and the *cross* as the vital point of Christianity. Take this away, and the Gospel is *nothing*; nothing saving even in *Christianity* but this—comprehends all!!

I. The meaning of the phrase, “*Jesus Christ, and him crucified;*” and,

II. Consider the sentiment in the text as the apostle’s proposition, &c.

I. The meaning of the phrase, “*Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*”

The orthodox Church of Christ who believe in the atonement interpret the phrase as not to the *fact* of the *crucifixion*, but as a *sacrifice* for sin, and consider *faith* in it, necessary to salvation.

Others, who deny the atonement, think he merely announces the *fact*: the Jews might come under this class.—But some professing Christians go but a shade farther, and suppose that by his death he witnessed to the truth, was a good man, and died a *martyr*.

We are at no loss to determine the apostle’s meaning by his own explanation, which is the fairest way in all authors. See chapter i., verses 23, 24; he says, “*But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God:*” now his meaning must take in these expressions. Apply them to the *low* phrase believed in by many!

“*To the Jews a stumbling-block.*” Was it the *fact*? No, they acknowledged the *fact*; and how, then, could they stumble if this were the meaning? They might, indeed, be angry at assuming that his death was the seal of his truth; but there was nothing in this on which to *stumble!* (Observe, I confine my remarks to “*Christ crucified*”—not the *resurrection.*)—Again, if so, how was it *foolishness to the Greeks*, that a moral teacher should be put to death? The same had been witnessed among themselves.—Socrates was

so put to death, and many of his disciples remained, still fond of their master and his sayings. Again, how, if this be the sense, is "the *power of God*" manifested? It would have been rather displayed in *preventing* the crucifixion: the best of men was dying, and his enemies had tried the power of his God, when they said, *come from the cross*; and Jesus had said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—Again, His *wisdom* would be shown in planning his escape.—What incentive to virtue would there be in all this? *None*.

But take the other view of the phrase, and see how this text explains its meaning. It was a *stumbling-block to the Jews*, who sought to be justified by *works*, and had lost the doctrine of justification by *faith*, for which Paul contends with them so much in Romans; nay, they saw nothing through their own sacrifices; they had lost their design, and knew nothing of the doctrine of *atonement*.—It was *foolishness to the Greeks* to tell them they could only be saved by believing in a Jew, rather than in any of their own deities; and a Jew who was rejected and put to death by his own countrymen.

See, again, "*the wisdom of God.*" Wisdom is knowledge in action, and is displayed in devising suitable means to accomplish the end; it implies *difficulty* in the way to be removed or overcome.—Now, the end is the *salvation of sinners*. See God's wisdom in accomplishing this through all *difficulties*; and what were they? They arose from the moral government of God; how to *pardon* without justifying the sinner; how to show his mercy, and yet his abhorrence to sin. See how Christ's cross removes it. God's *holiness and justice* are awfully displayed, and more so than if *all men* had been damned; his hatred to sin is such as to sacrifice his Son!! Surely no encouragement is given to sin now, though he do pardon.—How does it illustrate the Divine power? God attained no increase of *actual power*, but his power was restrained.—Our king can pardon *all*, but his own laws restrain him.—So God, but the law of his government must be honoured. But when the sacrifice was made, see what an illustration of Divine power follow

ed; at Pentecost it descended "like a rushing mighty wind;" and it is yet, and always will be, with us!! It now rolls on over the world, and all the energies of Deity are put forth to save man! Before, he was *mighty to destroy*—now, *mighty to save!* three thousand at once!—Thus our text explains,

II. The proposition that this is the only doctrine, not to say *in the world*, but even in *Christianity*, which is saving! All others are built on this, the sacrificial death of Christ! To show this, grant that there must be an *adaptation* in the Gospel to produce the end, the salvation of men! For example, God might have filled the Bible with other truth, say philosophical; and it would have been as much *truth* as the *present*; but nobody would expect *salvation* by it; there would be in it no adaptation to our case. The Eastern merchant must fail in the desert if no water be found; yet his treasure is the same, but of no use: so we, with all this treasure of wisdom, if no living water.—Grant then, I say, that in the revelation of God there must be an *adaptation* to our case.—God has two ways of effecting his purposes: what we call ordinary and extraordinary.—Of the first are *miracles*; in these he acts with or without means, and often *contrary* to means, as in the case of the blind man anointed with clay; but in the gift of a *revelation*, he has laid aside *miracles*, and proposed the subject to our reason; it must, then, *adapt* to us. Now, what is in the Gospel that adapts itself to our condition? First, what is our condition? 1. We are *corrupted!* Those who interpret the phrase in the text to its *low* acceptation, deny this.—Then account for *the evil* in the world. Vice does exist, and it cannot be the *natural* growth; if no *fall*, the natural growth would have been virtue. Not able to deny its existence, they say it is the effect of example; but why, then, is it *universal*? Why is it that no virtuous posterity of a virtuous ancestor, who never saw evil example, was ever discovered? The Bible gives the only reply: that mankind fell at its *root*, and *all* are corrupt. Do they say still, that human nature is equally capable of good and evil? Why, then, the greater propensity to evil?—Still we say, because all are corrupt. Now,

if so, then leave Divine aid out of the question, and we sink still lower, for we have in us no regenerating principle.

2. We are *guilty* also; *actually* criminal; and this is the cause of eternal death: "The wages of sin is death." See, then, our case—altogether *helpless*, through corruption, *without strength*, and exposed, moreover, to *future and eternal punishment*.

Now, this very condition it is which adapts the Gospel to us. Try every other doctrine revealed in the Gospel, and see if it will do. 1. True, it reveals more of the glory of God; but what avails all our knowledge of God, *if no sacrifice*? The Gospel discovers his goodness in glowing characters; but, while this rises on the scene, it is shaded by his *justice*! Ask the damned? They have more views of God's majesty than we, but it eases no sorrow; they might see this goodness as for the *obedient*, but for them, helpless and guilty, his justice has a darker shade—darker, even for the brightness of that goodness!—"Dark with excessive bright!" Salvation, then, does not lie in this view of God.

2. But you say, the Gospel is a beautiful moral law for our guide! True; there is more law in the Gospel than in the Old Testament; yea, more than in any other dispensation.—The Gospel is not compared with the law as being *less strict* in its requirements: no; *it is the same*; yea, the holiness and spirituality of God are set forth under a brighter glow! But it is compared with the law as a system of grace; it "gives grace to help in every time of need." But see man as *corrupt* and *guilty*; and does this apply to these *morals*? What comfort can they give? We do not want *law*: go to the victim condemned to die; take the statute-book; expatiate on the law he has violated; alas! he wants *pardon*, not *law*.—*Miserable comforters*!

3. You say, there is the *example* of Jesus! Granted.—We cannot study it too much; yet the salvation of *guilty* men is not by this. Example is only *law in action*, and the former answer applies to this; if the *law* is unwelcome, so is its *exhibition*.—And what is the *fact*? See the Jews: what did they benefit by his *example*? They heard his gracious words, and yet hated him the more. The mind of man

nates it.—Was it not the *excellence* of the example which made them *hate* it?—they gnashed on him with their teeth!

4. You say, there are many *promises* in the Gospel *without that of Christ, or salvation by Christ*. True; but hope cannot rest on them. The promise of a common Providence, food, raiment, &c., is made; but we are guilty—and what are these, if, after feeding for the day of slaughter, hell is to be our portion? And again, the promises are all to *his people*.

5. “But in the Gospel we have ‘life and immortality brought to light.’” Granted. It is delightful to contemplate it; a state where the body never dies, and the soul and body may have immediate access to God! But this is not the *whole* revelation; it says, Heaven is the residence of *saints*! But we are *guilty*! What comfort to be led through it, and then, like Adam and Eve, cast out, and directed to the superscription, “There entereth here nothing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or loveth or maketh a lie.” There is nothing, then, in the Gospel on which to rest but the sacrificial death of Christ. Here, “what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” We do not say that the above doctrines are unimportant, but this of the cross is the only one that adapts itself to man, and is the basis of the whole—nothing without this *centre*; ’tis *life*, ’tis *light*, and pervades all.

We are *then* interested in the morality of the Gospel.—“I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” Also in the example of Jesus. His glory shines into our hearts, and we are changed from glory to glory till we bear his image. Then we are interested in the promises—faith claims them. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”—Then we are interested in a future state,

for, "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

Thus the cross connects them all!! * * *

Application.—1. The cross is of no use to us if we do not confess our corruptions, inability, and danger.—Be penitents—if never humbled, pray for repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. 2. We see the certainty of pardon—all is *hope* in the Gospel, and all *certainty* too. Say not that you are unworthy—all your unworthiness is *assumed* in the Gospel—it justifies *in the character of ungodly*. 3. We see what is meant by living a life of faith in the Son of God—hang on Jesus—all flows from him—all your petitions are presented by him—the blood of Christ and faith in that blood are all that stand between you and God. * *

(In vain to build this house but for this doctrine; may it ever reverberate here.) 4. Pray that a ministry may ever be among you to preserve this doctrine. * * *

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SERMON XLVI.

THE CHARACTER AND CONQUESTS OF MESSIAH.

Psalm cx., 1-3.—The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

OUR Lord made use of the language of this Psalm in his celebrated conversation with the Scribes and Pharisees.* The words being quoted by such authority, lead us,

1. To speak with certainty as to these words being the words of David, spoken in the spirit of prophecy. The importance of which information will appear shortly. We observe,

2. That the sentiments contained in this passage are not

* See Matt., xxii., 41-46.

merely the private opinion of the Psalmist, but were written under the plenary inspiration of the Spirit of God.

3. That the Being termed *Lord* in the text, "Who shall send the rod of his strength out of Zion," is the Messiah.

4. The subject is the spread of his Gospel throughout the world.

We shall consider,

I. The nature of that Being in the text, called "*David's Son*." There can be no doubt the passage must be understood prophetically, of the *man* Christ Jesus, partaking of flesh and blood—the humanity of Christ—like unto us.

But he was as truly *David's Lord*; the text *can* have no other meaning. When we recollect that the Psalmist was king in Irsael, chief of the nation, and had no superior, he can apply it in no other sense. David had no earthly lord.

This is seen to be the meaning of the text by the manner in which our Lord introduces it. "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, the son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord? saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word." What difficulty was there in answering this plain question?—What hesitation was manifested by the Scribes, and what was the occasion of this uncommon silence?—They rejected the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ! Why, if they would have allowed his Divinity, they would have answered that in his Divine nature he was *Lord*, and in his human nature *son*.

Let no man think lightly of this point. Nothing can be more *important*—it is the vital doctrine of our faith—nothing is more *interesting*; as *man*, he claims intimate relationship with all his creatures—he is our brother; as *God*, he is our protector and Redeemer, and "ever liveth to make intercession for us;" as *man*, he suffered the death of the cross to atone for our transgressions, and, as *God*, sitteth at the right hand of the Father as our advocate: "The Lord

said, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

II. The accomplishment of these words. This began when, by the Divine power, the stone which the Jews vainly thought would secure our Redeemer in the tomb, was rolled back from the mouth of the sepulchre, and he mounted to his native heaven; then it was he had accomplished his mission to this world, he threw off his human nature and ascended to his regal throne; then it was, amid the shoutings and hallelujahs of adoring angels, he ascended the throne of the Father. The pomp and grandeur of his entrance into this scene of magnificence and glory was not visible to the eye of mortals, but David has furnished us with some idea of its splendour: "Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne."—"The Lord reigneth, let the earth tremble; he sitteth between the cherubim, let the earth be moved." Who can describe the grandeur and solemnity of such a coronation! Then it was, after his assumption of human nature, his violent persecutions, his death and resurrection, that he was welcomed into heaven; then "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool:" angels and archangels conducted him in his coronation procession on the way to his throne of righteousness; and the Psalmist has furnished us with an anthem:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in.

"Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in.

"Who is this king of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is he king of glory."—"Sing, then, unto the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the voice of a psalm; with trumpets and sound of cornet, make a joyful noise before the Lord the King.

"Let the floods clap their hands, and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord." * * * *

III. We may infer from the text that to Christ and his government there are enemies. Strange as it may appear when we consider the low and degraded state to which man was reduced by the fall, and the infinite sacrifice which his Saviour made to redeem him, and the exalted situation to which he has rendered him eligible, that he still has enemies; enemies to his priestly office and his regal government.—Every man is or has been his enemy. However some of you may by this time have repented, you have been his opponents: “The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be:” so that our opposition to the government of God is the consequence of the corruption of our hearts, and these will remain opposed to him till regenerated by him.

But I need not travel far to prove that the world is opposed to the will of its Maker; I will not go among the Jews, the Mohammedans, nor the horde of infidels who taint the moral atmosphere of our own country * * * nor among the common rabble of sinners; but appeal to members of this congregation, men respectable in character, and Christians by profession. And how is it that God is so little in your thoughts, and that the least trifle which flits across your imagination chases him from you? How is it that your hearts do not submit to your judgments, conscious as you are that it is your duty to devote your whole souls to God? How is it that you draw back from giving your heart to Him who has said, “My son, give me thine heart?”

But we will try you by another rule. We shall find among you many admirers of religion, many who will favour us with their approbation and honour Christianity with their patronage—but when urged to render unto God the homage of their hearts, what opposition is presented to the wishes of their Maker! Tell the *covetous man* that he is laying up wealth to the neglect and ruin of his soul, striving for perishable riches, and neglecting to secure that prize which is superior to the world itself; tell him he must sacrifice his evil and mercenary desires, and seek the Lord, and him only, *with full purpose of heart*, and oh! see how he will recoil from the injunctions and commands of his heavenly Sovereign! Tell the *man*

of pleasure that he must mortify the deeds of the body and restrain his animal appetites, “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and Godly in this present world,” and he will revolt at the idea of being placed under such restraint and subjected to such control. Tell the *man of business* that he must not suffer his mind to be engrossed with the cares and concerns of this world to the exclusion of the interests of the world to come, and you will find him conjuring up innumerable apologies for his heathenish neglect, and many pleas of necessity will be urged to rob God of his due. Tell the *man of political strife* that he must honour his king and all that are in authority, in order to fear his God—and his evil nature becomes predominant, and he rejects the counsel of his God to exhibit his independence of man.—These are proofs of enmity to God which are before our eyes every hour of the day, and which we are absolutely forced to observe in the respectable and (as they are termed) refined ranks of life!

And all this bears the marks of *actual rebellion!* We must call him rebel who aims at the downfall of God’s throne, would abrogate his laws, who by his example as well as precept tends to overthrow the system of his Divine legislation. Now I find this in the heart of man. Is there one who would not repeal the law of God? Is there one lukewarm soul who would not wish that the laws of Heaven were more suited to the apathy of his own feelings? What does all this prove, but that our fallen, corrupt nature is sunk to the lowest depths of debasement? What argument do I need to prove the evil of our hearts naturally, when we have every day’s observation to convince us of it? Shut all books—never suffer me to read the learned metaphysical neatness of men on this subject: the evil, the deadly and contaminating evil, is too plain to need any additional proof.

All this, too, shows the aggravation of sin. After we have heard of the incarnation of our Lord, his persecutions, his miracles, his ignominious but glorious death, his resurrection, his ascension, his atonement and advocacy, and after his being seated at the right hand of the Father,

“Where he ever liveth to make intercession for us”—after all this, to shuffle and trifle with the Saviour who has thus bought us with his blood: surely, if anything will make us hate ourselves, considerations like these must have that effect.

IV. We are taught, however, in the text, the means by which his enemies are to be overcome: “The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies;” and the co-operation of his people—“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.”

By “the rod of his power,” we must understand his sceptre. It is a Hebraism, and may easily be explained by another passage: “For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” In Isaiah a similar allusion is made: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of the roots.” Both these passages have a direct allusion to the propagation of Christianity, and there is no doubt but the rod or sceptre which is to produce in the world such benign effects is the Gospel.

In what, then, is its strength? .

1. Its *evidence*. So mighty in the evidence of miracles and the fulfilment of prophecy, and so calculated and suited to the capacities of all, that its truth is felt alike in the extremities of the world. I need not surely argue on the authenticity of its Divine origin. * * * *

2. The *manner* in which it is conveyed to the mind of man. It carries with it the air and port of Divinity, so that all who hear its doctrine are ready to exclaim, “This man speaketh as one having authority: surely no man ever spake like this man.” Who that has ever read and compared the doctrines taught by the apostles, and those treated by the best and most refined of heathenish writers, has not been struck with the wonderful difference of their style and manner? One is all hesitation and tremour, as if fearful that they are treading on hollow and unsafe ground. But look at the apostles—bold and positive in their teachings—and you are

convinced by your own feelings that the veil is drawn by a mighty hand.

3. Its *strength* is exhibited by the manner in which it displays and shows man to man—by awakening within him a sense of conscious guilt and an emptiness of heart; a want generally of something which he knows he has not; an uneasiness of feeling which we cannot well describe; a continual thirsting, we know not for what.—But the Gospel resolves the enigma, and shows man his state. St. James speaks as of a mirror, and thus man feels the Gospel true, as it comes in contact with his own private thoughts.—This is, indeed, its strength, and I hesitate not to declare that it is by this means alone that men are brought to believe the Gospel to be the word of God. God makes it appeal to the heart and not to the reason. Not one in a thousand, *if any*, is ever convinced by cool reasoning on evidences of Scripture authenticity, but by the heart being affected. We would not, however, be understood as undervaluing the arguments which may be urged on the side of the Gospel; they are useful, and serve to steady the minds of our youth against being led away by the infidel publications of wicked men; men who, by their obstinacy and rebellion, are not unfrequently given up by God to believe a lie.

But we believe that God works upon the hearts of those who do not actually reject his word, and gives them proofs of the truths of the Gospel by deeply implanting them in the heart. For “The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Thank God we have such a powerful instrument to work with. Distant would be the day when we might expect the gathering in of the heathen to be completed, and the grand millennium commenced, if we had first to convince the mind, by reason, of the truth of the Scriptures, the Divinity of the Saviour, the doctrine of the atonement, and thus reason him into a belief of the whole process of salvation. Thank God, he

has devised other and more simple means ; and the readiest and surest way to be convinced of the Divinity of Christ's mission, our fall, and the efficacy of his atonement, is to rest a full reliance on the Scripture way of salvation, and try by *practice* the plans which Almighty God has proposed.

4. But its strength lies more in the infinite compassion and tenderness of the Redeemer and of God to his creatures, than in anything else which the Gospel displays. It may show how fearfully he has fallen from God, done despite to his commandments, and broken his law ; but that is not sufficient to entice him back to the shepherd of souls. You may talk to the felon of the heinousness of his crimes, of the aggravation of his iniquities, and you may enter at large with the traitor on the enormity of his rebellion, but it will produce no gratitude to the authority which instituted the means of his punishment and stamped his crimes evil. But show him his pardon, or tell him by such simple means he shall be saved from the effects of his transgression, and you inspire him with love and gratitude. O ! show to a sinner the death and sufferings of our Lord ; show him how his judgment is suspended ; that there is nothing God so much hates as the putting him away ; that all is the effect of God's love to him—it is this which subdues enmity to the kingdom of Christ : “ We love him because he first loved us.” This is the principle on which the sinner comes to Christ, under such circumstances ; the principle of love, and not of fear : this is the rod of his strength which shall be sent out of Zion.

But it is “ to be sent forth.” The Gospel is to be sent forth as the instrument to subdue the world unto Christ. Yea, it has already been sent forth ; and see the results. It was never sent yet without effect. None of you will pretend that it has been preached to you without effect, saving effect to many, and improving to all. Now, as it follows as a consequence of the Gospel being sent, that many are saved, and others improved, who have been under its influence, if all Christians who have been blessed by its influence

and saved by its means would but exert themselves, England entire might be immediately improved, and its national vices and sins corrected by its more general and particular propagation. By extending the work, by carrying preaching into hamlets and obscure villages (and let it be understood that we are come to this), if we will we may illuminate the world. Do not ask me how it is that God has made the salvation of one man to depend upon another. So it is, and that is sufficient. Remember, it is on this principle that we are continually acting; parents are anxious to instruct their children, and God has enforced it as a special duty, and the child looks to the father for direction and help.—It must be sent forth. * * * * * *

5. We may learn from the text that God on some occasions grants *days of power*: “His people shall be willing in the day of his power.” He grants special power for the removal of obstacles: such instances of his power are not rare.—We have seen those powers of the earth who, by their direct opposition, have frustrated the designs of our missionary counsels and the spread of the Gospel of Christ, so shaken by the Providence of God, that in the end Christianity has been planted in soils formerly the most unfriendly to its vegetation.—The nations of the earth have been shaken, and the consequence has been the general diffusion of the word of God, and in time we shall reap a rich harvest from that seed which is now sowing.

It was the case in this country (England) at the time of the Reformation. God removed, by the strength of his rod, by a special power, all those barriers which appeared insurmountable: he unlocked the prisons in which the Holy Scriptures were imprisoned by languages; he raised up men mighty in controversy, and full of holy zeal and the power of his Spirit; he overthrew the prejudices of ages and established his truth in righteousness: they “were giants in those days.” * * * * * *

But this passage has special reference to the influence of the Holy Spirit on the consciences of men.—This Spirit working in the hearts of men and in the Christian churches—these outpourings of the Spirit of God—seasons of special

influence were known in the earliest ages of the Christian Church. We read of the day of Pentecost. * * * And have we not witnessed like effects in our own land? Instances are in our own recollection. Early ages of Methodism. * * * And these instances of the special influence of the Spirit we are taught to expect the nearer we approach the final triumph of the Gospel. They are forerunners of that blessed period in which all the world shall be subject to the sceptre of Christ; a time which we may reasonably believe is not far distant. God appears to be making his way clear; his heralds have proclaimed his will, and it appears to be accomplishing: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." Thus these special outpourings of his Spirit are merely preliminary visitations to his final possession of the world; mere preparations for the ultimate and universal knowledge of our God. * * *

* * The herald has gone forth, and the passage quoted is as applicable now as in the Baptist's days. Look at other passages: "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain: O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!"

"Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." Do we need stronger encouragements? Here are actual promises of his Godlike designs, and commands for his people to co-operate with him.—We must go up into the mountains, and behold the vices of the world. And then it is, when the Church does her part well, that we have these strong assurances: "The Lord will come and work with his strong arm: he shall conquer!" What delightful anticipations! These will be the results: "The whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea:" "The desert shall blossom as the rose."

6. We are taught to expect the co-operation of his peo-

ple.—When God shall send forth the rod of his strength in that day, the day of his power, the people shall be willing. No allusion is here made as to the peculiar manner in which they will show their obedience, and we are left to surmise upon this point.

They will not doubtless be afraid to publicly confess their Lord. By this I do not mean that general and fashionable confession which we are apt to make—a general profession of the excellency of Christianity, and a profession of the Christian faith—but a willingness, in season and out of season, in whatever company, to preach by precept and example the doctrines of Christ, reproving improprieties in whomsoever observable, and on all occasions frowning down every attempt to lessen that reverence due to sacred subjects.

There will be a willingness in his people to propagate the doctrines of their faith in every possible manner. His people will manifest a willingness to suffer also should it be necessary. God has in his Almighty Wisdom so ordered affairs that he never yet granted special days of power, but his servants were endued with special strength and fortitude of mind suited to the exigencies of the times. Thus he supported the martyrs, and they exhibited a cheerful willingness to suffer in the cause of their Master. Thus it was with the Founder of Methodism; he too was willing in the day of his power. Men too will likewise be found “in the day of his power,” to carry the light of his Gospel to the dark, unchristianized parts of the world. View the blessed men who have been sent by various denominations of Christians; view them in the most destructive climates labouring in that cause to which God has called them; and shall not we say that *we* live in the days of his power? Is not every Christian community moved by the same ardent spirit, actuated by God himself? Are there not evident proofs that God is signally pouring out his Spirit upon the nations of the earth? And are not his servants willing to sacrifice their homes, endeared to them by every domestic tie; willing to leave their country, high among the nations of the world for its liberties and privileges, to go forth in all

probability to return no more, but become speedy martyrs in the cause of our blessed Christianity?

This is the willingness mentioned in the text, which shows a supremacy of love, a mighty disinterestedness.—But *his* people shall be willing in the days of his power to contribute their property, or, rather, the property with which God has blessed them, to support the cause of their Redeemer. “Him that honoureth me, I will honour.”

SERMON XLVII.

THE CHILD SAMUEL.

ADDRESSED TO CHILDREN.

1 Sam., iii., 10.—Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.

THIS is a short text, and therefore easily remembered: let us consider the history of little Samuel and his mother.

1. She was greatly afflicted because she had no children; for this was a mark of reproach among the Jews. But mark her conduct: she told her affliction to *the Lord!* she vented her heart in prayer. Mothers, is this your practice? Do you retire to the Lord in every time of trouble? No wonder that the sorrows of some persons oppress them so much; they never bring them to the Lord; they are determined to bear the load themselves, and they often sink under it. They say they are too much afflicted to pray; they will not suffer God to be a partaker of their grief. Yet how unreasonable is this! The mind feels strangely relieved by the sympathy of a fellow-creature; how much more by His who “can be touched by the feeling of our infirmities.” Pious Hannah was a praying woman; in the midst of her complaints she always came to her best Adviser.

(But perhaps some are here who, in the time of their trouble, have made a vow to the Most High, as Hannah did: have you kept it? Remember, “the vows of God are upon you.”) * * * * *

Eli saw her praying, and thought she was drunken, for

she only moved her lips—she was praying *in her heart!* I know no finer *expression* of prayer than this, her lips moved mechanically to her inward prayers! It is that prayer which gets to God, *fervent* prayer! You say, in preaching, “from the heart to the heart;” and if you can be affected by it, how much more God, in whom all perfections are of the finest tone! It often happens that such a soul is discouraged by the view men take of their state. Eli reproved her for being drunken. But poor Hannah was not drunken; she was a woman of a *sorrowful spirit*: “I have,” said she, “poured out (not wine into me, but) my soul unto the Lord!” Yes, her soul was like water! such was her sorrow.

And what was the effect of Hannah’s prayer? Why, what was likely to be the effect of such a prayer? She was a true Israelite—she prevailed with God, and her countenance was no more sad.

Hannah had a son; she called him not by any family name; she was most solicitous to show her gratitude to God—she called him Samuel. O how pretty a name! It means “*asked of the Lord!*” But what did she do with the child? (See chap. i., 27, 28.) “I have,” said she, “lent him to the Lord as long as he liveth.” Thou hast given him to me, I lend him back to thee! (*My name John.* * * * * *)

Parents! did you ever consider your children as being not yours, but lent to you by God? You are but their nurses; and are you nursing them for eternal life or eternal death? Instead of nourishing them with useful instruction, are you making them to drink *certain poison* by nursing them for the fashions of the world?

Children! did your parents ever yet give you to the Lord? My dear children, ask them when you go home; if not, it would be better that you were orphans! You would then become the children of Deity—the children of Providence—God would employ some one to train you up for himself. *Mothers!* The Gracchi.—Have you ever considered these things? I believe God has often removed a foolish mother out of the way rather than suffer her to injure those lovely innocents her daughters. * * * *

And you *do* them an irreparable injury! * * * * Conformity to the world is the great plea, but there must be a transforming from the world. I plead not against education! God forbid! I know its value; but there is a difference between that and making your children like puppets hopping upon a wire, or training them up in all the fashions of the day. But, you say, "You would make them singular." It is better to go to Heaven with the *few* than to hell with the *multitude*. But believe me, you will not hurt their prospects in life by such a training: I never knew a daughter trained in the fear of the Lord whom the Lord did not prosper! Perish the fashions—only save their souls!

Fathers! did you ever lend your sons to the Lord? (But you see no fruit? Taylor or Johnson.) (Perhaps you are disposed to say, I gave them to the Lord in baptism. Did you ever seriously consider what you did at baptism? You made an oath! that they should be kept from the pomps and vanities of this wicked world! Have you performed your oath? You swore to your child at the holy font, and will you have the world believe you are perjured, or liars, or hypocrites?) * * * *Parents!* lend your children to the Lord to-day, and never get up in the morning without imitating Job's example—offer sacrifices for them: and let the *evening* sacrifice be regularly performed likewise. In their education, whatever you do, do it with an eye to eternity! Oh! look a little beyond the grave! Conceive the case of children cursing their parents at the day of judgment for such an education as you give them! Many such instances will there occur. There are many things which will lead to harm, though they appear innocent at their outset. Virtue and vice go a long time in parallel lines, and vice keeps virtue in view a long way. * * * The physical and moral evils of dancing. * * * The Chief Baron's Daughter. * * *

2. Look we now to Samuel's conduct. In chapter ii. it is said, "The child did minister unto the Lord." Remember, none of you are too young for this; it is not said how soon Samuel began to serve the Lord, only "the child was young." Should I be asked how soon a child may begin to serve God, I would say, "So soon as that child is able to serve

the Evil One ; so soon as he knows what is wrong." The inward check he feels for the wrong is a proof that the Spirit of God is with him, as it was with Samuel. I have known many who served the Lord from their youth up, and many who died happy in the very morning of life. And oh ! how pleasant a sight is a holy child ! If spared, what a holy man. * * * Gray hairs in the service. * * * " It will save you from a thousand snares." * * * Benson at Kingswood. * * * And oh ! how pleasing also to parents ! What joy must have filled good Hannah's heart as she came up year by year and brought him " his little coat !" (Chap. ii., 19.) *Children !* as you increase in years and stature, you ought, like the blessed Jesus, " to increase in knowledge and in favour with God and man ;" for it is said of Samuel, " He grew and was in favour both with the Lord and also with men."

Now see how the Lord reveals himself to such children ! He passes by Eli the priest, and chooses to speak to Samuel. What a friendship have God's children with him ! Surely the Lord doeth nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.—Noah, the flood. * * * Abraham, the cities. * * * When, by his judgments, he resolved to punish the house of Eli, he lodged the heavy tidings with Samuel ! God can commune with none but *holy* men and holy children, for he is *holy* ! " Where is there a prophet, saith the Lord, and I will speak to him ?"

" And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days ; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim that he could not see ; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep, that the Lord called Samuel : and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not ; lie down again. And he went and laid down. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I ; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son ; lie

down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the Lord came and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth." Samuel slept not far from Eli's chamber in the tabernacle, for it was his business to keep the lamps trimmed. He was so young that he knew not the voice of the Lord, but because he was a good child God revealed himself to him!

Oh! how often has God called you, my children, to serve him! Some, perhaps, by the loss of a parent. * * * Methinks I see God waiting in the chamber of death to observe what effect it has upon the child.—Some by sickness; and God has again restored them. * * * Some by dreams—all of you by checks of conscience: did you never feel incitements to prayer? Oh! if you had followed them, God would have spoken to your young hearts. * * * Begin to serve the Lord to-day; seek him by prayer. * * *

Some of you he is calling in another way—to minister to him in the world of spirits! The seeds of death are in you! Oh! keep the lamp well trimmed here until it blaze in glory!

Parents, behold your children! *Children*, behold your parents!

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SERMON XLVIII.

THE COUNSELS OF A DYING FATHER.

ADDRESSED TO CHILDREN.

1 Chronicles, xxviii, 9.—And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.

THERE is a time when giddy youth will listen to the words of wisdom. A dying parent will inspire attention, and in proportion as that parent has been kind and loving you will treasure up his words. Hear, then, the dying words of *David!* a good man; so good as to be a man after God's own heart. He was about to go the way of all flesh, and to leave Solomon fatherless; and he was young and tender, like the ivy clinging round the parent oak, but was about to be torn from it: David therefore stood upon his feet; he mustered his little remaining strength, like dying Jacob, who strengthened himself and sat upon his bed to bless his little ones.

Parents! are you as intent on the spiritual welfare of your children as the dying monarch? Is not your *first* concern their temporal advantage? There are two kinds of religious parents in the world. * * * You are anxious that they should gain applause from men, and not the approbation of God; you seek to leave them swimming in the full tide of human prosperity, not thinking that the mighty deep may be so swelled by a blast of pride as to produce a whirlpool which will swallow them up forever and ever. What prospect has a dying parent leaving his children behind him in the broad way to hell?

Children! is this the case with your parents? Are they early instilling into your minds the notions of human greatness and neglecting your immortal parts? Do they ever summon you around the fireside, and say, "Come, ye children, and I will teach you the *fear* of the Lord!"—(Senti-

ments of Alexander the Great.)—How many children will have to trace the cause of their eternal destruction to their parents! They are, indeed, often the cause of their *temporal* destruction. (The story of the boy who bit off his mother's ear!) You love them, and are careful for their health; but you would be monsters if you did not.—The love of the bear for its cubs is equal to yours, if not superior! David's superiority is in training them for heaven! * * *

“*And thou, Solomon my son.*” How sweet! my son! Oh! how the little heart swells at the words *my son!* my daughter! *mine!* * * * “*Know thou the God of thy father.*” Could he have recommended his God in sweeter terms? “The God of *thy father!*” It is well said that example is better than precept; the parent may give good counsel, but if he cannot say, “The God of *thy father,*” it were useless.

Parents! you are, I will hope, accustomed to recommend to your little ones the fear of God; but can you do it by saying, “He is your father's God?”—“Be ye followers of me,” &c., should be written on every parent's forehead!—The real parent not only calls to heaven, but leads the way! *Parents!* God has clothed you with a tremendous power! You may be the greatest blessing or the greatest curse to your little ones!—a help or a hinderance.

But what is it to know God? It is not merely to know that he exists. “*Acknowledge him in all thy ways.*” But how is this to be done? David explains it in the following words: “*Serve him.*” * * * *

(It may signify either barely an act of our understanding and judgment, or also an act of our choice and affection,) &c.

But you say, “how can a child serve God? Does he need servants to wait at his table? Has God any wants? or, if he has, can a *child* supply them?” You also say, “I have heard of little Samuel being called to minister to the Lord when he was very young, but then it was *in the tabernacle.*” Well, Samuel's service did not differ from the service God requires of you, and this you will see clearly if you remember what it is to serve another. Your parents have servants, now what is their business? To obey their masters

and mistresses, to do what they require in household affairs. Now the service of God is the same; it is to do what God requires, or, in other words, to keep his commandments. How you may attain to this power I shall explain hereafter; I shall here only show what these commandments are; they are two: *Love thy God, and Love thy neighbour.*

I. Love God with all thy heart! love nothing like him, for you owe no one so much love as you owe him! "Oh," says Mary, "I love mamma more than any other being." Believe me, I want not to detract from your love, but remember, God gave you that good parent, and you should love the Giver more than the gift. If I were to present you with a little token of my love, I am sure you would keep it for my sake, and I dare say you would love it; but would it not be foolish in you to love the gift and not the giver? "Oh yes," say you, "I would only love the gift for the sake of the giver; I would love the giver *most*, but I would also prize the gift." Now this is what I want; I want you to love God most who gave you your kind parents, and yet to love them for his sake. God gave you good parents that you might be induced to love him by what you see of his love in that gift. And how often have I known God to take away the parent from an ungrateful child that would not love its God! Take care that this is not your case. By loving God supremely you will give the best proof of your love to your parents, for they may in all likelihood be preserved to you in long life, to train you up in the fear of the Lord! This, then, is the *first* commandment: "My son, give me thy heart!"

But what proof will you give of your love to God?*

1. You will avoid everything which would be displeasing to him (of prayer and reading of the Bible I shall speak by-and-by); improper company you will not mix with; a child that does not love God you will not take to your bosom. * * * The speaking of improper words yourselves will not once be thought of, nor will you suffer an evil thought to have any place in your minds: the Sabbath-day will be

* See Appendix, p. 307.

regarded as the Lord's day; and you will give it to the Lord.

2. You will not only avoid all that is evil, but you will do all the good you can; you will meekly show forth the love of your God by setting it off with all its attractiveness in a holy life and conversation. Believe me, you might all be preachers! You startle, but I repeat it, you might all be preachers, though not all pulpit preachers. The child in Ceylon. * * * The child reproving the clergyman. * *

But I told you there were two commandments: the first, Love God; the second, Love thy neighbour. "But who is my neighbour?" Doubtless your *parents* are the first in this reply. Next to God comes their claim, for they are to you in the stead of God. But is there a little child here who needs this exhortation?—I fear there are some who do not love them enough! Oh! if you only knew how much they love you, you would love them yet more and more. Some of them are poor, and obliged to toil almost day and night to preserve you in a little decency and to give you a little useful learning. Perhaps, when you are asleep in bed, your anxious mother is yet sitting by her little fire consulting with her husband about your welfare. You are their last concern at night, their first care in the morning; and it is very hard work to make their little pittance afford you a plentiful meal! Perhaps they are very often obliged to deny themselves of their scanty store that you may have enough, and that you may be clothed as well as their little income will allow. When you go home to-night, my poor little ones, whose parents' lot appears so hard, look up into your father's face and see the furrows which his daily labour has made upon his wasting frame! Take hold of his hand! feel how hard, how rough it is; more like horn than human flesh. See there the effects of his daily toil; in the sweat of his brow earning his daily fare; and while you hold his hand, again look into his face, which perhaps betrays the decline of his natural health and strength, and ask him, "Father, for what have you toiled so hard? Father, what have you laid up for your later years after so much hardship? What is to support you when these hands are no longer able

to perform your daily task?" Ask him these questions; and when the feelings of his heart will permit him, I doubt not but he will give you this reply: "It is true, my child, I do toil hard, but it is not for myself! My own wants could be easily supplied. I want but little, nor that little long; but I labour for my boy, I weary myself for my girl, that they may be comfortable, and that I may give them some useful learning to fit them for their future walk through life. This has always been my care, and it was not possible for your mother or me to make any reserves for that time when the infirmities of age should lay us aside. Your wants have always swallowed up our little earnings; and the only dependance we look to for these few remaining days or years is the love of our little ones! That is all the treasure we have been endeavouring to lay up in store, and we have spared no pains to increase it." * * * *

Oh! my poor little ones, would not your hearts swell at hearing these words? and could you be hindered from clasping your parent's neck, mingling your tears with his, and saying, "Father, you shall have my love." * * *

But some of you have not a father. * * * The commandment is beautifully expressive: "Honour thy father and thy *mother*." The mother is the weaker vessel, and she requires more of your love; her tender heart is more susceptible than a father's, and that will *wound* her delicate spirit which would only grieve your father. If she be your only parent, you owe her *double* love! The father's and the mother's should both be offered to her! And oh! what is a mother's love! Ask a mother! nay, she cannot tell you, but you may read it in her actions. You forget the time when you were a little loathsome creature, covered from head to foot with the smallpox—one mass of putrefaction, a disgusting spectacle to every one. Your nearest friends would scarcely touch you. Who but a mother would press the loathsome object to her bosom? Who but a mother could gaze upon the spectacle without a feeling of abhorrence? she, with increasing love. The more you suffered, the more she loved! the more disgusting you became to others, the nearer she pressed you to her loving heart.

“She could not forget her sucking child.” Or when your body was filled with deadly fever, and your very breath tainted the air with impurity and filled the house with infection; when all forsook you, who but a mother would hang over you and breathe the putrid atmosphere, regardless of her own life in the preservation of yours!—Oh! the love of a mother!—Grieve her not; the least token of disregard to her mild restraints will wound her tender frame; will you, then, instead of joy, give her sorrow? You will only know her full worth when you know her want, as I do. For nine long years that sweetest word in human speech could never hang on my lips—“my mother!” Oh! the very remembrance of the slightest provocation will wound you in the tenderest part, when she is removed! and I do think that such a remembrance would be the angry ghost of me!

And yet such children there are, who provoke even a mother’s love to such a height as to tear her heart from them! (Taylor’s Sermon. * * *)

But some of your parents are placed above dependance, and are not obliged to toil thus hard for you! But is your love to be abated to them? Oh no! the duty of the child to the parent is the same in every circumstance: in riches as in poverty; and I am sure they value your love more than their wealth.—What is now theirs, will be yours; and in this respect you are under increased obligations to love them; their greatest joy is your welfare; let them have the rejoicing of the Gracchi.

But, after your parents, the command extends to all; love all with a love of good-will; bear hatred to none.—See the Indian who was robbed. * * * *

Appendix.—Illustrate “*To know God*” by paraphrasing Jeremiah, ix., 24. This *knowledge* implies to act up to it, and love him in return; hence David says, “*Serve him.*” How? By doing his commandments. The first is, “*Love God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength.*” How do you show this? 1st. By getting frequently into his company. 2dly. By frequently reading his word as if you heard from your Creator father.—But this is only domestic;

how is it shown in social life ? 1st. By abstaining from bad company — Peter. — 2dly. By reproofing others.—God has often blessed infantile preaching.

The second command is, “Love all men.” How ? With a perfect heart. (Apple, or, rather, pear.) A *willing* mind, not as the unwilling schoolboy. * * * *

Why with this perfect heart ? Because God searches the heart ; a power only possessed by him. Man may be deceived, for he looks only on the outward appearance ; but God's eyes are as a flame of fire ! [See Proverbs, xvii., 3.] Look at Ananias.—God *searched* the heart as with a candle ! Solomon believed this truth which David taught him, and acted accordingly.—See 1 Kings, viii., 39. “And the *thoughts* :” —even the idea before matured into a thought, and the thought before acted on.

“Before our lips pronounce the word,
He knows the sense we mean.”

“*Afar off* ?” * * * *

How are you to seek him ? 1st. Read his will. (Elisha's mantle—child and bad bargain.) 2dly. Do it with prayer, or it will be useless. (“Me love God”—Cora forsake him.) Refusing to obey ; to read, to pray ; disobeying parents and mingling with the ungodly leads to a bad end—“cast off *forever*.”—See 2 Chronicles, xv., 2.—*Solomon*.—Conclusion.—Jack, or poor man in Dublin visited by stranger's friends. * * * *

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SERMON XLIX.

THE CHRISTIAN'S INHERITANCE.

1 Cor., iii., 22, 23.—Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours ;

And ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's.

ST. PAUL was a faithful messenger of the Most High ! had been a violent persecutor of Christianity, but was miraculously converted. Wherever he preached the power of the

Holy Ghost attended his word; and signs and wonders were wrought.—We do not mean miracles—but God acknowledged his own word by his holy ministry.

He planted many churches, and when removed to others, he supplied his lack by epistles, in which, as in the text, his heart expands. * * * One reason of which was to correct the contentions of his Corinthian brethren about various preachers. * * * * *

* * * “*Christ is God's*”—“the Lord's Christ”—necessary he should be *human* for sacrifice; inferior to the Father, and such inferiority will continue till this kingdom is given up, &c., and Christ resumes his wonted dignity, as explained Heb., i., 3: “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” He is now only *in the glory of the Father!* then he will have the glory which he had of *his own* “before the world was.” We shall inquire,

- I. What is it to be Christ's?
- II. The privilege of such.

I. What is it to be Christ's?

Not a mere name of Christianity: all Europe has this, yet not Christians—nor an attachment to this or the other religious sect. * * * * *

1. A Christian is one who obeys the commands of Jesus; makes *his* word his rule; does nothing but what is well pleasing to him! brings his actions hereto.

2. A Christian is one who has the assurance that he pleases God in all things! the witness of God that all he does is right—a Divine impression that he is accepted in the beloved—a son of God—(*Young*)—and he knows it; for, “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

3. Such a one abides in Christ as the branch in the vine—feels he is grafted into Jesus, as he felt the seal of *adoption*, and bears the fruit of *holiness*.—See the process of

grafting—thus the branch, made *inwardly* good, bears *outwardly* the fruits of holiness—perfect love to God and man!

4. He is made a member in Christ's mystical body, Christ the *head*; he has the closest communion with God!—Cut off a member of the human body [and how intensely does the whole suffer]; but preserve it, and, if the body is healthy, it will partake in all its joy. * * * The blood of the member is the same with the body. * * * So we are made partakers of the Divine nature, and restored to what Adam lost.

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* * * Are *you* Christ's? is his word *your* rule? have *you* the witness? is *your* fruit unto holiness? does Christ live in *you*? If so, all is yours.

II. The privilege of such.

Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas—the ministers of Christ all yours!—By some you have been brought to God, by others built up.—See this material edifice—many instruments were employed; yet all had their use, and you enjoy the fruits, &c. So the spiritual temple!—sometimes a *Boanerges* comes, cuts to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. Next, a *Barnabas* gently pours in the balm of consolation; yet, whether the whirlwind or the still voice, *you know it*; they are all your servants in Christ Jesus!

Paul was a pillar!—his judgment clear and solid—his epistles are one chain of argument—nervous. Apollos was eloquent, and drew his hearers with the magic band of love! They hung upon his lips. Peter was famous for zeal; a native eagerness predominant in his temper, which urged him on to the most bold and generous undertakings. But it is the same spirit, and provided for your edification. Some for digging deep, &c., &c., that the edifice be perfect and entire, lacking nothing; yea, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

“*The world.*” The Christian has nothing to do with its follies—crucified—knows that its friendship is enmity against God—keeps himself unspotted from the world. But the ne-

cessaries which the body requires from the world, God has promised—he can dismiss all *anxiety*—the wicked *feed* on their *death*; carking care!—The Christian hears Jesus say, “Behold the lilies”—and draws the inference himself—in want of food? “See the sparrows.”—He pledges himself: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” And he changes not. “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” God will *tax* the world.—“*Life!*” his *eternal* life is hid with Christ in God! Yea, he has committed the keeping of his *soul* to Him.—But his *natural* life also—till *He* permit, it cannot perish. “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm”—but “evil shall slay the wicked.” See Simon Peter—dungeon—hell devised to chain him—nor even then remitted the keepers: “He will seal the stone and set the watch.” The night arrives—he is asleep! though Herod, the Jews, the Church; though earth, and heaven, and hell awake! He knew for him to live was Christ, and to die was gain. The word is given—angel flies—devils avoid the light—in the power of “I am he,” he comes: “He that sitteth in the heavens laughs, the Lord holds them in derision.”—See Daniel—the Hebrew children—though men and fiends—beasts, and elements all combine, *nothing* can harm you.—“Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God.”

“*Death*”—no cause of terror—though we do not know what it is, ’tis gain to him—gloomy road, but it leads to heaven. The gloom may impress him with *awe*, but he is not afraid—though the lightnings flash, &c., death is his.—Abba, Father, with more assurance as he approaches home, and while feeling the pressure of the dying frame, &c. (Moore.) *When I spake of Jesus.*

“*Things present.*”—The *spiritual* estate; all spiritual blessings in Christ; every promise, every possible blessing man can need; every spiritual good which can enrich the soul—all are yours. Ask! and yet he is “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think.”

“*Things to come.*”—A veil hides them—an *eternal* weight

of glory; and after God has opened his treasures and admitted us to a participation (for we are not merely to *behold* his glory), and multiplied this through eternity—yet an eternity of glory is to be revealed. But Paul could not utter it; we must die to experience it. Light within light, and glory within glory.

Paul could get no higher. See his climax: he exclaims, “*All are yours.*” Oh! child of God, see the entailment of thy estate in Christ Jesus. God sets no value on anything but Jesus—empties heaven to thee, since “He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up”—to *death* for thee. If, then, thou art reconciled by his *death*, much more, &c.—he has received again his well beloved, and now to part with him no more.—*Freely* will he give everything. He gave his greatest—nothing equal to Jesus; therefore he will keep back nothing inferior. We shall walk with him in white, for we, through Christ, are worthy. * * *

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Sinner! “If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” Thou art not Christ’s; then what is thine? Art thou laying a claim to these things in common with us? Divide the text and take thy portion; it is only “*in this life!*” But hell awaits thee! Conscience shall be let loose at thy spirit. Mock? “Whether thou art *lost* or saved, we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are a savour of death unto death, or to the other a savour of life unto life.” God will be glorified by both.

Thus have I endeavoured this day to open to you our commission for the ensuing year. In the order of God’s providence he has removed from you those who for the last two years laboured heartily in the Lord, those who exhorted you, with many prayers and tears, night and day. They are removed to another part of the vineyard, and we enter into their labours.

But, alas! who is sufficient for these things? Well might St. Paul cry out in all the feeling of his soul, “Brethren, pray for us.” Yes; do indeed pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

We have this day broken the seals of our message, and offered you all in Christ Jesus.

Not that we bring you another Gospel; we offer that which ye have heard from the beginning; we again tender to you all things in and with Jesus! This was the word of the Gospel which ye first heard from our venerable father in God, Mr. Wesley. With much labour he sowed this Gospel-seed from this very spot; he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; for, though he lived not to see the crop which is now produced, he believed firmly that it would multiply and increase; and therefore in the morning he sowed his seed, and in the evening he withheld not his hand, not knowing whether should prosper this or that. * * We have seen that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to prosper. But, though the hand of the Lord was with Elijah, of what use would that have been to the Israel of God if it were not with Elisha likewise? When our Elijah was removed from us, many were the cries which followed him to heaven: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," and we saw him no more. But the mantle dropped, and has yet been preserved among us; the seed which he planted has ever since been watered by his successors, and the harvest has increased from year to year. In this consecrated spot stood the venerable Fletcher; and from this hallowed stand the immortal Coke often procured a shower from on high!—I will say nothing of the living characters who have from year to year refreshed this garden of the Lord: their names are sweet to you, their memory will never be forgotten!

Well; though your ministers may be changed, God changeth not, neither does the word of his grace. "All things are yours." We first give you ourselves—our time, our gifts shall be employed for you—our prayers shall be for you—our tears shall be a memorial for you—our cries shall pierce heaven for you—the unutterable groan shall swell for you—our strength shall be wasted in your service—our lives shall be devoted, under God, to you—till death shall release us

from a world of care to meet the Great Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

It is not unlikely that some of you, or some of us, may be summoned away ere the year shall close. It is calculated that Methodism furnishes an annual return to the world of spirits of fifteen thousand souls. The society of Dublin may be required to make up a proportion of that number !

“Who first shall be summon'd away?
Most merciful God, is it I?”

The Christian has no fear on this head ; though timid nature may start an objection, and in the trembling accents of fear, whisper “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,” the triumph of faith drowns the feeble tones of nature’s cry, and challenges all accusers: “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?” “Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours”—all is *mine* ; yes, *death* is yours! Thus living, preparing to meet your change, you will not only find all things present are yours, but things to come shall be yours—yours in Christ !

“No condemnation now I dread,
Jesus, and all in him is mine ;
Alive in him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness-Divine,
Behold, I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own.”

SERMON L.

JESUS OUR SYMPATHETIC HIGH-PRIEST.

Hebrews, iv., 15, 16.—For we have not a high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

OF all subjects upon which the human mind can dwell, that of redemption is the most amazing, whether considered

with regard to God or man : with regard to God, the justice which required and the mercy which gave Jesus ; with regard to man, the depth of depravity into which he had fallen, or the height of holiness to which he may be raised.

Many persons, and indeed good men, when considering this topic, carry their minds to the cross, and there leave them ; but this is not the most important. * * * We have an Advocate !—

I. Consider the character and qualifications of our Advocate above !

St. Paul never fails to set the Gospel before us in its most alluring point of view ; at one time, beseeching us by the tender mercies of God, so abundantly displayed in the redemption scheme, and in our text by the tender compassion of our High-priest, Christ Jesus.

He is writing to Jews, whom he wished to wean from rites and ceremonies ; but how tender of their prejudices ! He was well conversant with the human heart ; he knew its attachment to some one thing above others, and particularly when this was considered excellent in its own nature, and truly so with regard to its author ; he was willing that, though the New Jerusalem is founded on the apostles of the Lamb, the gates should bear the names of the tribes of Israel ; to have made a Babel of Judaism, and raise Christ's (Church) on its ruins would have been absurd ; the Jew would always say, "*We know that God spake by Moses.*" But man will always give up a *lesser* for a *greater* good ; upon the priesthood the whole law depended ; and if he could convince the Jew of the superiority of the claim of the new priesthood to that of Aaron, he might hope for success. He shows them that this most sacred office in the Jewish polity was continued in our dispensation (verse 14) : "*We have a great High-priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God ; let us therefore hold fast our profession*"—and now he describes his character and our privilege.

The high-priest was also the *advocate* with God for the people ; he had not only to offer the sacrifice to God, but to make intercession thereon. In this latter part of his duty we

shall describe the High-priest of *our* profession—a comfortable character for believers to behold.

The necessary qualifications for an advocate are,

1. *Wisdom.* If an advocate is not possessed of this, he can never succeed; he must have the fullest information on every possible point, &c.—That he might enter the better into our state, he took our nature on him and was made man; he entered into our *circumstances*; though, *as God*, he “knew all our members ere they were formed,” yet he would know them as *man* likewise, that he might be *Jesus* more effectually—that we might not despondingly say, “*Doth God know?*”—This wisdom our High-priest possesses in an eminent degree—himself “*the wisdom of God*”—“*Logos*”—“In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom”—He knows whereof we are made, and reads the *heart*.

This was not possessed by the high-priest under the law; it made man that had infirmities.—He was not “the *very image*,” &c.—he knew not the dispositions of the people for whom he was sprinkling the blood, nor the sincerity of their humble claim for mercy; he could not read their hearts; but *ours* does; and with pure consciences we appeal to him and say, “Lord, thou knowest all things.” Wonderful Counsellor! Well might Paul call him a *Great High-priest*.

2. *Influence.* If not this, with all his wisdom, our advocate could not succeed; he must be removed far above the transgressor in influence, and nearly allied to the offended; as the *Son of Majesty!*

The high-priest had no influence abstract from his *office*: he too was a sinner on a level with the party for whom he interceded, and had no dignity or worth to undertake our cause: a mere man; himself liable to punishment; nay, a *son of man*; confessed his own desert of the same punishment with the sinner by the sacrifice he offered for his own sins; he had no boldness therefore. * * *

But Jesus is the *Son of God!* equal to the Father upon one side, and yet on the other allied to the offender! *A kin to both!* We are his brethren! and yet he is the Father’s well-beloved and only SON!—heir of all things! in whom

his soul delights. Such is his influence, that the Father will freely give all things for his sake: "Whatsoever ye ask in *my* name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."—He repeats it: *Ask what you will.* He has all power in heaven and on earth, and has been exalted in our nature to the Mediatorial throne; we have a friend at court! These two qualities of the High-priest are given in the 14th verse: "Seeing then that we have a great High-priest, that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

3. *Sympathy.* This quality is beautifully expressed: "We have not a high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."—Sympathy means *love*, ardent love to the creature arising from having experienced the same himself. * * * In vain the two former qualities constitute an effectual advocacy, unless he entered *feelingly* into the party's case; and this could not be unless he had been in like circumstances. An advocate may plead for a bribe, but his heart cannot compassionate.

The high-priest could not enter into the feelings of the people; his rank placed him far removed from many of those scenes in which they needed peculiar sympathy.

It behooved Jesus then to be made in all things like unto his brethren; in all their afflictions he was afflicted; he entered into their sorrows before he would die for their sins, that he might be a merciful High-priest, &c. He knows whereof we are made; he had before him the view of the intercession he should have to make for us, and anticipating the advantages thereof, his heart rejoiced, his tongue was glad, and for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, that he might be able to succour them that are tempted. Thus also it behooved him to suffer; "he was a man of sorrows!"

The other ingredient in sympathy is *love*; ardent, burning.—Love induced him to undertake the task; and now that he has accomplished it, will his love abate? Nay, he loved them the more he suffered; *yea, loved them to the end!*—*O! the bowels of Christ!*

Examine this a little more.

1. "He can be *touched* with the feeling of our infirmities." This may mean the natural calamities, sufferings, heaviness, &c., consequent of our union to a body of flesh and blood! (Watson on the Resurrection—praying in a corner, &c.)

Poverty? He was poor indeed!—had nowhere to lay his head; often on the ground—sometimes he lodged at Bethany, even after the honours of his entry into Jerusalem.

Family affliction? See him at the grave of Lazarus!—groaned! felt it acutely! he wept!

Suffering? Look at his!—The angels are yet pondering over it—and remember, this was for *you*! In every state he can compassionate; in every case you may hear him whisper, "*I have felt the same.*" *He knows how*, the best way, to succour such.—(*Dwell on a few instances.*)

There is something infectious in sorrow; tears will communicate. See the woman with the issue of blood; no need now to say, "Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring down Christ from above." He is nigh to all them that call upon him; a sigh can reach his heart; he can yet be touched.

2. But he was tempted as we are, and that in *all points*. Satan ejected all his darts at him; emptied the quiver; and at certain seasons He said emphatically, "This is your hour and the power of darkness."—Hell was let loose at his devoted spirit. No sinner was ever tempted as he was. Satan appeared in a tangible shape.—Tempted with riches, honours, pleasures; hard thoughts of God; fear of *holding out*; with anger—"to call down fire," &c.—with pride, &c.—The world and Satan both allured; every bait was used; sometimes so sharp, he cried: "O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."—But so far from its passing away, it increased, and he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" His confidence as his *Father* seemed tried to the uttermost; yet though he uses the term *God*, he cries *my God*, &c. He withstood them all—want of bread was tried—without sin!—he conquered for us; though he fainted, he never fell! * * * It is no sin to be tempted,

and all may resist; for our strength is *that of Christ*. It rests on us!

Now, Christ feeling all these, pleads for us; how, we know not; it is hidden from us, and we ought not to ask; but we see his fitness.

II. Our duty, and the way of performing it. "*Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace.*" This throne occupies all space. Jesus sits on it; it is his mediatorial throne. It is not a throne of *justice*; it has been sprinkled upon by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and is rendered a *propitiatory*, not a *justice seat*.—See the Holy of Holies.—"*Come boldly,*" not like the rationalist, cold and unfeelingly; nor like those who cry, *dear Saviour, sweet Jesus, &c.*; but the middle path, having a sense of what we, the addressers, are, and whom we are addressing. 1. Come as Elias came, *fervent prayer*. 2. Remember it is a throne of *grace*; one to which we have no claim; and that our Jesus is now Lord of all!—yet exempt from tormenting fear, from a *faith* in our exalted advocate; for faith claims it through him, and fastens upon *his* worthiness.

Contrast the timidity of the high-priest under the law, the sacrifice *he* provided might not have been all attended to; but God himself provides the sacrifice here, and says, "Come, for all things are now ready."

1. And having approached it, what do we ask? *Mercy!*—love in action. Explain the word.—This adapts itself to our *infirmity* (verse 15). We want Jesus to sympathize, to compassionate. We join the cry of Bartimeus; we want to roll our cares on *him*; he has invited this! O! how sweet to feel *now* that Jesus is with us in the fire; to hear him say, "*Fear not, I am with thee.*"

In all our temptations he keeps, &c. * * *

But, again, our best actions cannot stand without *mercy*.
—Jonah. * * * * *

2. Grace to help. This must mean the Spirit of God. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"—the Spirit supporting us in every trial

and temptation. Mercy for the past, and grace for the future. This refers to the second clause in verse 15—" 'Tis grace that keeps us day by day, and will not let us go."

Temptations are not removed, but grace is imparted. O! how sweet the feeling when, after a sore conflict, the angel of the covenant comes and ministers to us grace!

But we are not to *ask* only; faith is *bold*: "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up." Faith *obtains* mercy and *finds* grace; all heaven's treasures are open to the believer; he goes in and out.—See H. Moore on prayer.

The mourner is encouraged; he looks at God's law as broken; look again *through Christ*, and see the breach healed.

God's throne is erected here; come and look upon it. *

SERMON LI.

ALL THINGS WITH CHRIST.

Romans, viii., 32.—He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

No chapter so beautiful. Its burden is the privileges of believers.

1. Privilege, Justification by faith: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Here is the privilege, and here the proof they give of it: "*No condemnation.*"

2. Privilege, Regeneration by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. How awful the 8th verse: "So, then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God." But (9th verse) "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

3. Privilege, The "knowledge they have of the things freely given them of God." They not only know that they

are justified by faith, but they have the evidence of it (16th verse): "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

4. Privilege, The right and title to everlasting life. Not only *sons*, and the *witness* of it, but the prospect of the inheritance connected with it (17th verse): "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

5. Privilege. He reverts to our *present* privileges to show the *helps* we receive in preparing us for them, and conducting us to them.

1. The helps of *Providence* (28th verse): "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

2. The helps of *grace* (26th verse): "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"—and these chiefly in prayer.

Thus are we led to all good. Then reviewing all these, he exclaims in triumph (31st verse), "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

The gift of Christ is the only ground for any legitimate trust in God. If Christ had not been given, there would be no foundation for hope in God.

I. Examine the important fact asserted.

II. The inference deduced from it.

I. Examine the important fact asserted.

He spared not his own Son, &c. Suppose the fallen state of man—made upright.—He lost the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and then became *corrupt*—could not extricate himself. In God's mercy he found remedy—then God determined to give his Son!—"Spare" has two senses.

1. He did not keep him back ; there was no obligation in God thus to give us Jesus. Herein is *love!* &c. ; no obligation of justice.

2. He did not excuse him from suffering. “ For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee.” “ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment”—How awful a sense!—“ *Spared not his own Son!*” but demanded that suffering which, considering his moral nature, endured as much as we could have done to eternity!—“ His *soul* was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death”—and his *soul* was made an offering for sin—the Divine nature could not suffer, but gave efficacy, &c.—True, his human weakness did at times shrink, as in the garden—the Lamb opened his mouth!—My God, &c., joined the cry of the murderers.—But die or *Justice!*—

It was *God* that *delivered* him up—whatever was done by Judas or Pilate was done by *permission*: “ Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.”

“ *For us*”—not our remote advantage merely, as in resurrection, but in our stead—that we might not perish. Here arises the doctrine of a vicarious offering, as in the 53d chapter of Isaiah.

“ *For us ALL.*” Not some men of *all* countries, but “ for every man”—though the text primarily speaks of believers, yet not confined to them.

II. The inference deduced from it: “ *All things*” necessary and salutary.—

1. All the comforts of this life which he sees it is safe and proper we should enjoy. God has the prerogative of knowing what is best for us—he knows each man’s condition so well that he can best cater for us—be thankful that he *deigns* to do this.—Connect even our temporal blessings with the atonement of the Lord Jesus.

Man has a *right* to nothing but punishment, as one guilty of high treason ; so man is a rebel—he has forfeited all. No *common* mercy to him. Whatever he has more than

hell, it is for Christ. Hell is his only due.—How temperate, then, in food and clothing. * * * *

2. But the phrase "*all things?*" chiefly alludes to spiritual blessings, and especially the five privileges before mentioned. The interrogation here is an assertion—to suppose the contrary would be ridiculous! Three positions may support this inference :

1. He gave him to *enemies*, traitors, rebels. If he gave his *Son* to *these*, what will he give to us who have thrown our arms away? "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die."

"But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."—"While sinners" not saved, but to be saved.

2. He gave him unsought, and even undesired.—Heaven would fully satisfy our desires; but he has given what is above our highest desires.—The first step to man's recovery was taken in God. (Enforce the interrogation.) The *elect* now, and what, then, will he withhold!

3. He gave us his *best gift*. There is no act of God's power but we may conceive a greater; but in this condescension! His own Son! here is the emphasis—he was a Divine person.—If a creature, the apostle would have magnified the greatness of the purchase with the small price. He has no such other gift.—Omnipotence is limited here—we can ask no blessing adequate to this.—Hence, what is the pardon of sins to God? Nay, he delights in it. This does not now require any sacrifice on God's part. Why, then, should he withhold *inferior* blessings? We are warranted to ask till we think of some gift greater than Jesus. But he gave his Son that *he might give us pardon*—make us heirs, and give us the Holy Ghost.—Now, shall he lay the foundation, and go no farther? Where would then be his consistency? How is he the same? How could he be said to be without shadow of turning?

Lastly, he will *freely* give us all things.—No regard to merit or worthiness in the receiver.—Apply this to man. As he had no such regard when he gave his Son, so he yet acts *freely*—pardons, sanctifies, saves to heaven *freely*.—When man sinned, God asks not, What does he *deserve*? but, What does he *need*?—A Divine Redeemer. Just so now: the question is the same: “What do they need?” A pardon.—A sanctified soul, &c.—whatever it is, let it be *freely* given!—True, we should take our unworthiness into account, but God does not; that is not *his measure*. Our unwillingness to ask, and our timidity, &c., is partly accounted for by this. To ask anything of our neighbour, we find he impoverishes himself more or less in serving us; we ought to remember that God has them for the *very purpose* of bestowing, and that *he is paid when man receives*. The feast is prepared, and if not participated in by the guests invited, *he* is the party injured.—All things are ready; the expense has been incurred.—If we asked these things before Christ was given, there would be no room for hope; the expense of obtaining them would be too great—the sin of the world now is the not receiving “the great salvation.” God has made a marriage for his *Son*, and them that are invited will not come. * * * * *

Application.

1. We see the importance of evangelical principles. The sophist thinks that principles have no effect on his practice.—Yet there are some points of doctrine which he must believe before his heart can be right.—There is no religion without *trust* in God, and this grounded on the doctrines of the Gospel—this hangs on two points: *the Divinity* and *the Atonement* of Jesus Christ. You cannot think too highly of Christ and of his blood. All the religion you can live well with, or die safely with, is that of the cross!

2. We see the view we should have of God the Father. *He loved us!* This should influence us in our prayers.—Regard him not as a harsh being—as if *bribed* by Christ’s death to look on us. Christ’s death is not the *cause* of God’s love, but the *effect*. Infinite mercy exercised itself with infinite justice. Then think highly of God the Father. Never doubt but God loves you; angels knew and felt his

goodness before; but till now they knew not how much he could love, especially such unlovely objects.—To whom am I going when I pray? Not to an enemy, not to a stranger, but to my friend, my best friend, who has proved himself such. I ask pardon, holiness, heaven from him who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. This makes faith strong and powerful. True, I approach him through the Mediator, but he is of his own appointing by a sacrifice, but it is offered by himself.

Finally, while we see the *foundation*, it teaches the need of *building* on it. What use without a superstructure? How foolish would a man look who laid a foundation *only*? And what fools are we in the sight of God and of angels if, while we talk of the cross, &c., we go no farther—make no application to it—erect no building upon it—apply not for the *all things*.—These are *with Christ*—when you feel convinced, *accept of Christ*.—Lose no time—then *with him* God gives pardon, and holiness, and heaven—*without him, nothing; with him, anything*.—Believe, then, on him.—Trust yourselves in his hands. * * * * *

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SERMON LII.

THE STRONG HOLD.

Zechariah, ix., 12.—Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope; even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee.

THE language of the prophet is beautifully lofty. Expatiate on this.—He addresses the Church of God as then established on earth under the beautiful feminine appellation of *daughter of Zion*: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.” “He is *just* ;” emphatically so; not *more* just, but just in the abstract; there is no *justice* but with God.—Neighbouring governors were not just; or if at times just, not so always;

but he is always just ; therefore fear not, but *rejoice*.—Whenever the king makes his approach, the people rejoice because of the honour—“*and having salvation ;*” the two kinds of salvation from the *guilt* and *power* of sin, for Christ’s kingdom is the kingdom of heaven, and this is the prerogative.—Again, alluding to other kings, conquerors who brought their trophies with them.—But his salvation is not of a *temporal* only, but of a much more important one ; he comes, and salvation comes with him ! “Oh ! that with yonder sacred throng.” * * * Hosanna.

But if the prophet had ceased his description here, the daughter of Zion might have feared to look on him because of his great glory. Had he described him as coming like an earthly monarch, with all the appendages of pomp and show, it is true they might have *rejoiced*, but they could not have hoped to be on familiar intercourse with him ; he therefore adds, he is *lowly*, contrasting him herein with all earthly monarchs. * * * * *

Contrast his great humility, and show how repugnant is pride to Deity. * * * “*And riding upon an ass*”—to show that he is familiar with his people, and free of access to all, however poor. * * * * *

Having given this sublime imagery of his person and manner of entrance among them, the prophet proceeds to show what kind of sovereignty he will exercise, differing herein from all earthly monarchs. “I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off : and he shall speak peace to the heathen ; and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.” He comes not ushered in by the battle-bow or the war-whoop, &c., and refuses any warlike weapon to aid him ; the clashing of sabres or the roar of war, the Indian yell or the more refined thunder of the cannon, are his disgust. “Art thou a king then ?” “My kingdom is not of this world.” But he shall speak *peace* ; he conquers *by all-powerful love* ; he uses no other weapon, but by this makes them yield to his love’s most gracious power, &c. ; and by this means *only*, his dominion shall at last extend from sea to sea ; it shall spread

over the earth, and by this gentle, *godlike* means, all nations shall be subdued, and righteousness “shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.” What a glorious promise! Lord, accomplish it!—

I. What the prophet means by “prisoners of hope.”

II. What by “the strong hold.”

III. What by “rendering *double* unto thee.”

IV. The time when he will do all this—“*To-day.*”

The subject is of the highest importance. It concerns our everlasting salvation. Hear, then, for eternity! * *

I. What the prophet means by “prisoners of hope.”

The whole passage is highly figurative. We can know nothing of our own state or of the other state of existence in a world of spirits without figures of *earthly* things. Hence, with regard to ourselves, the Scriptures make use of a language of figures borrowed from the most loathsome diseases and imperfections of our bodies, to express the far more loathsome state of our spiritual maladies: “The *dead* hear, the *deaf* hear, the *dumb* speak, the *lepers* are cleansed,” &c., &c.—And elevated as these metaphors are, they come far short of conveying a perfect idea of our guilt and misery

But in our text he introduces another chain of metaphors highly figurative, and represents men as prisoners. In the 11th verse he says: “I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” The weary traveller, spent with fatigue and benighted in his journey, seeks about for the cooling stream to allay his parching thirst, and all in vain; and in his wanderings falls into a pit, out of which it is impossible to escape; and to add to his misery, the pit is *dry*, and in this miserable condition he is almost frantic by torture and despair. This figure has a retrospective and prospective meaning. It is just the state of the sinner here; he wanders about in this strange country, which he is obliged to own is not his home, thirsting after pleasure, and finding nothing to allay that desire, he plunges into the pit of sin, where this thirst cannot be supplied: but it has an awful prospective to that pit where there is, indeed, no water.—Dives * * * and is just consonant with the New Testament.

In the words of our text, the prophet changes the figure as to their state, but still continues the appellation of prisoners, but calls them prisoners of hope.

* * * Mankind are called *prisoners*, and when our Lord preached his first sermon at Nazareth he took for his text those words of the prophet, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the *prison* to them that are bound." We are by nature in the prison of sin, and Peter's state is no bad analogy to ours: he was *bound with chains*; and not only so, but had *two to guard him*, and he was *asleep*. The sinner is the same, and he is guarded by the infernal agency, who endeavour to keep him asleep lest he should see his situation. The word of God says we are led *captive* by the devil at his will. And as Isaiah says, the poor prisoners sit in darkness!—See the marginal passages.—But we are prisoners of hope,

1. Because we are out of *hell*; and so long as we are, there is *hope*.

2. Because Christ's Spirit has not ceased *striving* with us, and therefore there is yet hope of us; we may yet close in with the offers of mercy, and *consent* to be saved by grace.

3. Because Christ has not ceased to intercede for us in heaven, and the power of his prevailing prayer may not be ineffectual for us.

But even believers are in a sense *prisoners of hope*—"And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"* We groan for the redemption of the body, for we are saved by *hope*; it is Heaven's gift to cheer us in this mortal vale, and buoys our fainting spirits up. All such are encouraged.

II. What by "the strong hold."

* Rom., viii, 23-24

“Turn to your strong hold.” This is Christ Jesus; for in the 11th verse he says that it is “by the blood of the covenant that the prisoners are sent forth.” “On this rock I will build my church,” and all the art of man, nay, all “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” It is called a strong hold; it is not built on a sandy foundation, against which the floods shall prevail, but it is on the *rock of ages*! Turning to it implies,

1. Turning your back on the world and sin, for you cannot turn round to this strong hold until you do this.

2. It implies that you consider it—take a survey of and examine it.—God does not require you to adopt his religion before you have examined it; he says himself, “Come and let us reason together.” Bring forth all your arguments; and the result of our reasoning will be, that you will find that “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” His blood can wash out every stain.—It implies that you consider its *security*—whether it is the “*strong hold*” that you want.

3. It implies that you survey its *spaciousness*; take a look at its hiding-places and coverts from the storm; its battlements and towers, its buttresses and bulwarks, and therein you will find that there is enough for all, enough for each, enough for evermore.

4. Having satisfied yourselves on the survey, it requires you to turn into this strong hold; for of what importance is it to ascertain its use unless you avail yourselves of its benefits? Go into your capital, your city of refuge, and there lay hold on the horns of the altar, and find security and protection. (An enemy has you in his power, but not far distant is a strong hold, which if you will venture to attain, you will therein find ample security. Make the effort, then, ye prisoners of hope; rally into it; you are unsafe out of it.)

May not this apply to tempted souls; not to fight the enemy out of this citadel; not to venture on his ground, but to run to your hiding-place when attacked; he cannot follow you there.)

III. What is meant by “rendering *double* unto thee.”

Render *double*; this is a strong mode of speech to assure them of finding therein the utmost safety. Double for all thy fears; fear not to make the effort; struggle through thy fears, and I will pay thee double! Oh! the love of God! See how he confirms his promise. I *declare* I will do it: believe my promise. *As I live* I will fulfil it.—I positively assure thee I will perform my word.—This is equal to his oath; as if he had sworn by himself because he could swear by no greater.

* * * What heart of stone. * * * *

Query, may not this be considered as the proclamation of the king who is mentioned just before as coming to his people? They had been enslaved, and he had provided their ransom, and calls on them to flee to his strong hold.

IV. The time when he will do all this: “*To-day.*”

When? No need to put this off to the day of thy death; God is *now*, yea, always ready; to-day is my time, says God; perhaps to-morrow would be too late.—But, again, in that day when thou turnest to me with all thy heart.—Ere that clock strikes. * * * 'The *to-day*, therefore, refers to God in the first instance, and to man in the *second*. In that day when thou art willing to see thy danger, and willing to run to my strong hold, and take shelter beneath the cross, on that very day I will give thee that security and protection, and that peace in thy heart which will prove the earnest of heaven.

Application.—Ye prisoners of hope, &c., &c., I advise you now to flee to the strong hold; it may be the last invitation you will receive before you are hurried to the tribunal of God.—(The barren fig-tree.) The sword is whetted and brandished over your devoted heads; and God may this day withdraw the last beam of his oft-neglected Spirit. “Behold, I stand at the prison door and knock.”

(Having enforced the motive of fear, enforce the motive of love in our text.) Mind not the scoff of the atheist, &c.—If he will engage to answer for you at the day of account, why then give religion to the moles and the bats; but if you must answer for yourselves, fly into your strong hold. *

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SERMON LIII.

THE FAR OFF MADE NIGH.

Ephes., ii., 13.—“But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

WHEN Paul first went to Ephesus, he found them awfully given up to idolatry. Ephesus was a city of considerable importance—capital of Asia Minor—and well calculated to spread her pagan worship: the temple of their goddess Diana was there—the pomp and splendour, &c.—the inhabitants made a gain of their godliness. On these accounts, great was the opposition he met with in preaching, but the success was equally great. They received the truth in the love of it, and were made free: when he wrote this, they appear in a blessed state—going on unto perfection—and hence this is the most valuable of his epistles. That their minds might more than ever adore the riches of the grace of God, he reminds them of their former state: such remembrances are profitable, and *we* are here addressed.

- I. Our past situation.
- II. Our present privilege.
- III. The means whereby the change was effected.

I. Our past situation.

1. The meaning of this is in the 12th verse—“*Ye were without Christ:*” 1. As a *teacher* from God—not subject to his instructions—filled with your own ways: 2. As a *redeemer*—ye were under Satan’s bondage, and none to *redeem* you, or break off the yoke; led captive at his will: 3. As a *Saviour*—*nothing of Christ in you*—“*aliens from the commonwealth,*” common *weal*—knew nothing of this privilege of *Israel*—the term is expressive—how was it given?—Jacob was praying—all darkness, internal and external—one drew near, and he prevailed with him; and his name was changed to *Israel*, “because as a prince hast thou power with God and with men.” He then exclaimed, “I have seen the

Lord"—the term Israel means both—this was your common weal—you were *aliens* to it—explain the word—*Providence*, "*strangers*," &c. No promise is made to a sinner *as such*; they are *without Christ*, "*having no hope*"—no *true hope*; the Christian's hope is "*Christ in you the hope of glory*," "*without God*," &c. Atheists—not, perhaps, *professing* ones; query, if there are any?—but *practical*; *professing in words, in works denying—independent* of God! not in all their thoughts! they think not of accounting.

II. Our present privilege.

Not now "*without Christ*"—have him as their *teacher*, and want to be assured that all they do is right—have him as their *redeemer*—bondage at an end. God appeared to Moses, &c., so he saw you; having begun to follow his teaching, he led you to him as the atoning High-priest, and his blood was applied to your consciences, and his spirit *powerfully* delivered you from the thralldom of Satan. Have him as your *full salvation*; "for because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father"—your *king*! Not now "*aliens*," &c.—"We have seen the Lord, and live"—you prevailed—you are now the Israel of God, sons and princes!—such honour have all his saints—yours is a "*commonwealth*"—partakers of a common faith, a common benefit, a common hope, &c.—they mingle as citizens of the same heavenly country. You are the subject of their intercessions—the cloud of glory! the pillar of fire! the showers of manna! the water from the rock, Christ! "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" "not *strangers* and *foreigners*:" promises all yours in Christ!—are you fatherless?—bereaved?—poor?—afflicted by bodily infirmities?—walking in deep waters of sorrow?—in the fiery trials?—grievously tempted?—if a promise in the Bible to your *circumstances*, it is yours. Some mistake here; Paul corrects them in the Hebrews: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee:" this was to Joshua—*all* the promises are yea and amen.—Bank-notes to bearer. Not now *without hope*: 1 Peter, i., 3. *Quickened with Christ*. Romans, v., 5: "And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Not

now “without God,” &c. : all your works tend to glorify him—as your governor, led by him—as your master, do his will—as your Father, you delight in and reverence him; you know God, and are known of him!

Happy soul! how great the alliance!—walk with God!

III. The means whereby the change was effected.

“Not by works, lest any man should boast.” The blood of Christ! of the new covenant sprinkled on you by faith in the merits, &c. God and you met here at the covenant altar—the insuperable distance was overcome—sacrifice is provided—God provides himself the Lamb! it is slain, and the new covenant ratified by its blood! God holy, and man vile, lay hold on the victim—the same altar for both!—the Lord’s *Christ*, our *Jesus*—the *Lamb of God*, our *sacrifice*—God’s *Son*, our *Saviour*—all is effected in our very *sinful flesh*!

1. This blood, then, brings us nigh, Romans, v., 1, 2; guilt on the conscience kept us off; this blood removes it, and washes the foulest—then *boldness*!

2. By it, *continual* access to the throne of grace—worship God in the spirit, &c. “No condemnation”—

3. In death all our theme; nothing to rest our hopes on then but this blood. “I the chief of sinners am, yet Jesus died for me”—Wesley’s words—no Pharisees; and, again, “The way into the holiest,” &c. Yes, *after* death the way is the same—the passport, “*the blood of Christ*”—it is taken into the *holiest*.

4. When arrived there, the glory in heaven will be “Jesus, thy blood,” &c.; and the theme, “Worthy the Lamb,” &c. This Jesus will be all our theme.

—Sinner, apply *now* to be made nigh—for the blood to be sealed on thy hearts. “*O Love Divine!*” let it not be wast on thee. His blood follows thee, crying Mercy! spare, &c. *Now* determine—Heaven waits—angels bend. “In thy strength I will wait upon thee.”

Mourner! Christ pronounces thee blest. Comfort thyself—God is thine! Follow on—“the day-spring from on high” will visit thee—say not thy crimes are too great—there are those in heaven whose crimes were greater—yet washed, not a spot! Oh! believe the record true!

Believer! remember thy obligations!

SERMON LIV.

THE KING OF ZION.

Micah, v., 2, 3, 4.—But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God; and they shall abide; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

THIS Scripture was applied to the Messiah by the *Jews*, and that when Jesus was an infant, and when there were no prejudices. * * * All eyes were turned to this, the star, the wise men. * * * Herod moved, and all Jerusalem with him—a council of priests was summoned—he asked or demanded of them where Christ should be born, and they answered his question by the text.

The subject presents us with the character and claims of Him who is the hope of the Father, and was sent as a sacrifice for sin. We shall select the prophecies which refer to *Jesus* as this *Christ*.

I. Consider the promised Messiah in his true nature—a man—“come out of Bethlehem”—Jesus had his birth there. * * * All Scripture argues that he must be partaker of flesh and blood.

But he was more than man. The prophet speaks of a twofold going forth, of Bethlehem, and “from everlasting.” These words apply to more than man, the Son of God—God of God, eternal streaming forth of the Father.

These remarks enable us to ascertain who this Messiah was. Many others came from Bethlehem, came forth of Bethlehem; but we know only one who ever pretended to come forth in the second sense, and his acts manifested it. If accomplished, then, in Jesus, it makes him the true God as well as man.

II. Consider Jesus in the character of ruler—the Messiah was to be “ruler in Israel.” Did Jesus answer to this? Did he support the office by acts? What are regal acts?—The exercise of *legislative* and *judicial* authority.

1. The legislative consists in *making* and *repealing* laws. In *making* them, he restores and explains the judicial law on the mount, and gives the explanation, not as matter of private opinion, but as the sense of the law not to be departed from; he adds also a new law: “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

The manner of doing this shows the assumption of regal authority; the prophets use a different phrase: “Thus saith the Lord”—Jesus on the Mount, “*I say* unto you;” and the people felt the peculiarity of this manner; “he spake as one having authority!”

In *repealing* law—this is a regal act. He repealed all the ceremonial. “I came not to destroy,” refers to the moral—he seldom speaks of the ceremonial; it was ready to pass away—a thing old. Though sacrifices were prescribed to patriarchs, and awfully given on Sinai, yet he repealed them all by his *own authority*—the Passover by his supper. He abolished the ordinances by the cross, and sent apostles to declare that circumcision was *nothing*.—This was an act of royalty!—“Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me”—these abolished when a *body* was prepared for Jesus. He said to the woman of Samaria, “God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” “The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.” By that word he discarded the Temple at Jerusalem.—After his death a temple opened above. Aaron’s order gave place to Melchizedeck’s; the blood of goats to Christ’s; the mercy seat was removed to heaven, that the universe of God might become a temple for all, &c.

2. *Judicially*. The predictions of Jesus of the destruction of the Jewish polity by the Romans is important, not only as it shows Jesus a true prophet, but teaches what is meant

by "The wrath of the Lamb!" Mercy was first offered—"if thou hadst known."—But mercy was slighted!—No calamities were equal to this!—the text, "give them up!"—The blindness that happened to Israel was far beyond their temporal sufferings.—Depth of justice, says Paul—depth of wisdom!

He is a Judge as well as Saviour—a rod of iron.—"When ye hear, then, of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled," the rod is in his hand—nothing can injure the truth. But let the man who has slighted * * * "depart from me"—"O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." This is his reluctant work—force him not to it.

III. The text also calls us to his character as a shepherd. "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord." Kings are often considered as shepherds, especially [when they distinguish themselves by a kind administration]. If we find Jesus exercising this character, it confirms the prophecy in this respect.

But who, then, are his sheep? He first considered the Jews—and was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.—But the Gentiles also: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." How tender!—The whole human race then—for all we like sheep are gone astray.—In this view he commenced his ministry—"a little flock," and the apostles sent to find them. Peter—"Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls"—but *returned*, brought back. * * *

Distinguish the human race by the sheep *out*, and *in* the fold—his fold the Church—happy the folded sheep!

1. What is it to be in the Church of Christ? Not merely to join in ordinances and in fellowship of saints, but *his*, joined to the Lord in covenant, and he exercises a special care, love, and mercy in behalf of them that fear him; if conscious we were sheep once astray, but are now returned, let us lift up our hearts in acknowledgment of his love and care.

See the abundance and certainty of our supply also. (Psalm xxiii.) The supplies are *spiritual*: "He blessed us with all *spiritual* blessings." This is the adaptation of the Gospel—*spiritual*.—Riches of Divine knowledge: "Enriched in all knowledge unto the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Riches of Divine strength: "They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." Riches of Divine consolation: "Rich to all them that call upon him"—"The Lord is my shepherd." If we thus regard the liberality of God, and come in the act of faith with constant prayer, our daily history would be asking and receiving, knocking and entering in, &c.

We mark in this relation also the love and care of the Saviour to all thus committed to him; we cannot have too high views of the love of Jesus.—How measure it? Is it as his *creatures*?—True, &c.—Or in his *Providential* care? value these.—But neither of these is the rule.—Hear it, timorous soul: "I lay down my life for thy sake." This act is the measure—it is this that makes the love of Christ pass knowledge—hence his love is,

First. Constant—he changes not—he is ever with us as a good shepherd.—"He that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep." The promise of "Lo, I am with you," was the encouragement. So Paul: "The Lord stood with me."—

Secondly. Tender and discriminating care. "He shall carry the lambs in his bosom"—a picture of this when parents brought their children. * * * What encouragement to parents! he is the same. It may refer to *youth* also. The "young man" is an instance of his gentleness to youth. O young man, make him the guide of your youth! The young also with respect to experience; he regulates for these their trials. * * * Whatever fear we have, he will provide!

Thirdly. His care is effectual—*gives us* life—came to save, and does save. "I know my sheep, and am known of mine." Why lose the comfort of this declaration? If

we are his sheep, we shall never perish—allusion to robbers, “I will fear no evil.” Psalm xxiii. explains this.—These fears, like robbers, will press us most at death, “but thy rod and thy staff comfort me.”

2. The reverse is the condition of those not gathered. They know nothing of the green pastures. * * * (Swamp, &c.) Yet hear his voice, yield to his hand, and suffer yourself to be brought back.

Fourthly. The manner in which he exercises these offices: “in strength and in majesty”—combined—see it.

1. In the manner in which he stands accredited to the world as the *Royal Shepherd*. What is more *majestic* than the fulfilment of all types, every ray centring on Jesus. *

The *strength* lies in its irresistibility. *There are no infidels*; the Gospel is a manifestation to every man’s conscience, &c.—“Prove it?” I do by the hate against it. Why not hate Buddhism? one frets them, the other has no effect. Mohammedans may go on, &c.—Why? only explained by this, they are *convinced*—a convulsive struggle to resist—it is not against a shadow.

2. Look at the miracles. What a union of strength and majesty! The *majesty*—is the man—calms the sea, and raises his friend.—The *strength*, the winds obey, and Lazarus comes forth.

3. In the teaching of Jesus this union is seen: “Never man spake like this man;” they meant he was *more* than man. * * * Majesty of *matter*—sublimity of the sufferings. * * * Equal in *manner*—not the imagery of Isaiah. * * * Theirs was inspiration, but coloured by the soil through which it flowed. Jesus’s was uncoloured; fresh from God; its simplicity is its *majesty*; his mind never trembles; he is familiar with his subjects in all their sublimity!

But where is the *strength* of his teaching? Have not *you* felt its strength, been convinced, comforted? * * * *Ye* are the witnesses.

4. See it also in the manner in which he saves his people; “restoreth my soul”—to the woman at his feet—so *now* in the act of pardon—though not visible.—The

majesty of the *manner*—no great preparations, penances, pilgrimages, &c., but freely on simple faith.

There is *strength* also. They went forth and published his praise—dried their tears: the joy proved the power, the evidence proved the power. It is so *now*; thousands now feel the strength. * * * If you are seeking pardon, he is not backward—laid down his life—pardon is now yours.

5. See it also in his great work of bringing many sons to glory—the leader and captain of our salvation—march of conquerors at the head of victorious armies—nothing compared to the *majesty* of this; carrying them on step by step, giving them the victory in cases of which no one else is conscious, allotting them their proper work on earth, and all to make the harmony of heaven, and finally triumphantly leading them in, and presenting them before the presence of his glory pure and holy!

The *strength* is in this, he brought them not from a sinless world. * * * * *

6. See it in the government of his Church: “he shall *stand* ;” opposition is in vain; sometimes a hiding of his power, but perhaps a *majesty* in this.

The *strength*—he shall yet put all enemies under his feet, and the world become one entire pasturage.

The great result remains untouched: notice a few particulars. The Jews shall return, and He will stand and feed Jew and Gentile.—Even the *time* is marked out; when the Christian Church (she that travaileth hath brought forth) shall feel herself called to be a universal light. See what she has *brought forth*, the myriads in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and the isles of the sea.

It is declared, *then*, it shall be an abiding state of the Church—no more captivities—corruptions of the world, or the light becoming dim, or laxity of ministers * * * Till the name of Jesus is great to the end of the earth!

Application.

1. Ministers. We are his under-shepherds—not *royal* shepherds; therefore we can make no laws nor repeal, nor judge the sons of men. No such power—it belongs to Je-

sus. *Our* work is to “seek and to save that which was lost.” O for a tender concern!

2. Solemn admonition—he is the minister of the Father’s justice as well as mercy; but more awful justice because of the abused mercy.—Sin is folly—no sacrifice is given up by us; and then heaven guided, guarded, comforted, and saved by the power of Divinity at last. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, ye sinners.

3. Live by faith.—What to fear? He *stands* in his Church—waits to feed us continually—we shall not want!

SERMON LV.

THE CROWNING GRACE.

1 Corinthians, xiii., 13.—And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

In religion things are not always esteemed according to their value; hence, the *form* is maintained—the *power* is denied; *gifts* are preferred to *grace*—show to that which is solid—tinsel to gold. This was the Corinthian error; gifts for display rather than charity which edified.—He allows to covet the best gifts, but yet he shows a more excellent way—charity! Having showed her superiority, he then contrasts with her two sister graces—these three *abide*, and *must* abide—they are the three cardinal graces—but the greatest of these is charity.

I. Explain the meaning of the terms.

II. Establish the truth asserted.

I. The meaning of the terms.

Faith is an important term in Scripture: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”—high authority said it—and also said, “He that believeth *not*.”

Definitions not often given in Scripture, but we find one of these in Hebrews, xi., 1: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” It is a

Divine persuasion and conviction of spiritual and Divine truths—e. g.—Faith in God is a conviction of his (attributes) Being (—), self-existence, &c. Faith in Scripture is persuasion and conviction of Divine authenticity. “Holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” Faith in Jesus Christ that he is the true Messiah, the Christ of God, the only Redeemer; that he lived here, suffered, died, rose, ascended, and appeared for us at the right hand of the Father—“that this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

But that faith which brings salvation, is not the mere result of rational conviction, but of Divine persuasion—of the operation of God. It is a principle in the heart, not an opinion in the head. Saving faith is such a Divine conviction of God, as he is, as leads to seeing him who is invisible. Faith in Scripture implies * * * Faith in Jesus Christ, that he loved *me*, as leads to personal reliance.—

Connected with, and resulting from this Faith, is *Hope*—define it. The object must be *good*, otherwise an object of fear. Hope looks forward to all that heaven is and has—rivers of pleasure—eternal life in heaven with God, &c.—The object must next be *future*—“we hope for that we see not.” Many blessings once the object of hope, are now enjoyed by you. Still the great and proper object of hope is before you. The object must also be *attainable*, else despair: if heaven is not to be attained, I cannot hope for it. But we *may* obtain!

We “can give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.” Jesus died and revived that my faith and hope might be in God. “Blessed be the God and Father—a *living* hope—*begotten* again”—hence an heir.—We have an earnest in ourselves also: “Christ *in* you the hope of glory.” The promises ensure heaven if faithful to death—his word and *oath* are given.

Thus the mind tends towards it; hence, it is the *pleasing* expectation of future good.

Faith and hope are nearly allied; so intimate that “faith is

the substance of things hoped for.”—Faith has respect to things that are *true*—Hope to things *good* and *desirable*.—Faith can review the *past*—all history—look back into eternity before the world was—again can penetrate the vista of the future.—Hope cannot look back—always future.

Connected with these, and proceeding from them, is charity—love, *in its Divinest sense*. The substitution of the word *charity* for *love* has injured Paul’s meaning; both learned and ignorant apply it to *almsgiving*.—Read the context: a man gives *all* to the poor, and his body to burn, and yet has not charity! Divine love!

It has the blessed God for its great and first object; and what is this? It is his love in us reflected back on himself, “*because he first loved us.*” And this love is supreme—*all* the heart. “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” And then our fellow-creatures are the secondary objects of this charity. The brotherhood first. This is distinguished from benevolence * * * But also all the human race, &c., &c.

Thus all the tables are compressed into one word, *love* * * * Though the text refers our love to men chiefly, yet it implies that it springs from love to God.

These three are nearly allied — altogether — the same family. Yet mark the distinction. Faith relates to what God has said, Hope to his promises, Love to what he is, &c.

Faith believes, Hope expects, Love enjoys.

II. Establish the truth asserted.

Do not mistake Paul, as though he derogated from faith and hope. Lower faith and hope? He says they are *great*, though love is the greatest. Why?

1. It is greatest in point of *rank*—talents and gifts are great, but faith and hope are essential—we cannot go to heaven without them. But love is great in its own nature and character.—Faith and hope are of the operation of God, but love is from his heart—oozing out—by love we are let into God.—We are called to be strong in faith, to abound in hope, but to be *perfect* in love! We are to put on the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, but, *above all*, put on charity.

It decides the genuineness of faith and hope. Faith can-

not work without love—it is the animation of faith. And what is hope without love? Hope maketh not ashamed, “because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.” Faith sometimes has doubts, hope has fears, charity *always* hopes: yea, when faith and hope both stop, charity *believeth, hopeth*, does their work.

Charity is the *end* of what faith and hope are but the means; the *labour of love* raises the top stone.

Faith is the root, hope the buds, love is the fruit of the Christian’s tree.—Again, faith and hope are essential to man as a sinner, but love was his religion before he was a sinner, and it is now by love that he rises above his fall and forms alliance with heaven. Love is the religion of heaven! burning there—the element of heaven.—Again, not by faith and hope, but by love, we resemble God. God believes not, hopes not, but “God is love;” and by this we rise into his likeness.

Wonder not, then, that love is the foremost fruit of the Spirit, the end of the commandment, the fulfilling of the law—the *royal* law—that it sits on the *throne*—the queen of graces.

2. In point of *utility*. Faith and hope are selfish graces—private props.—Charity is to others like the sun in the firmament—goes about doing good.—Personally, she visits the sick, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked; has a wise head, an attentive ear, a quick eye, a heart! makes others’ woes, &c.; has an eloquent tongue, an open hand: “When the ear heard me, then it blessed me, and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me.” Thus she pursues her way; if contradicted, is not easily provoked; whatever is said of her, she thinketh no evil; she overlooks not the temporal interests of man, but chiefly regards the spiritual, and such as take in the good of the world.

3. In point of *duration*—abideth forever. Faith and hope will perform their last acts—they belong to probation. Faith and hope are Moses. Love is Joshua.—Faith and hope supply here the place of vision: “We see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.” In an evan-

gelical sense, faith and hope are not in heaven; we are to hope to the *end*; but no end in heaven: "One glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory." Charity shines brightest—one glory in the believer, another in the spirits of just men made perfect; brightest when body and soul are together. Charity is not at home here—the atmosphere is impure; *there* is her element—she shall burn brighter there!

* * * 1. Learn wherein real Christianity consists. In creeds? professions? No! but in Divine principles, holy tempers, benevolent actions.—Orthodox opinions, &c., unaccompanied with faith, hope, and charity, are fruitless.

He who is without faith cannot please God—without hope is without God—without charity. * * *

Faith is suitable to our weakness here—sense could not discern.—Hope bears up in the vale of tears, holds up the head in the waters.—Charity converts the enmity of the human heart.

2. Learn the *excellency* of real Christianity. It brings faith, it inspires hope, it fills with the love of God; and when this principle is *universal* in the world!! * *

Is this religion ours? yours? mine? Have we this faith, hope, charity? a man is better known by what he loves than by his faith and hope. Who loves strong drink, we know who he is * * * So, if man love God, we know who *he* is!

Now we look for the *effects* of this love in his life and conversation. Does your faith work by love?

* * * On the phrase *cold* as *charity*. * *

SERMON LVI.

CAUTION TO HEARERS OF THE WORD.

Luke, vii., 18.—Take heed how ye hear.

BUT how hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? Every preacher, then, is sent of God.

If the religion of man is to be reckoned by the *hearers*, &c.—but, alas! how necessary to urge the caution since so many hear in vain.

I. How we should hear.

II. Why?

I. How?

1. With preparation.—You expect the preacher to prepare.
2. Fixed attention.—Not like the fool's eye.
3. Candour.—Not a candour which compromises truth.
4. Faith.—Mix it up with faith as a medicine.
5. Practical application.
6. Prayer.—On entering the house of God pray.—Despise the sneer of the infidel.—O how the preacher feels when he is among a praying people!

II. Why?

1. Dignity of the speaker.—The Lord from heaven.
 2. Importance of the subject.
 3. Its individual application to us, as well as *general* importance to all.
 4. General inattention.—Three quarters of the seed to waste.
 5. Difficulty of keeping the mind from flying off.
 6. Awful responsibility.—Judged by it.
- Application.*—1. Gratitude for the word of salvation.
2. Arouse yourselves—wakefulness.—Anecdote of the

Father and Son.—Does the Son begin to think then? End with a consideration of death—our hearing seasons soon over!

SERMON LVIII.

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE.

John, xiii., 23.—Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved.

I. JOHN'S character.

1. Early piety.

2. The most remarkable trait, *love*, which was constantly evinced in his attendance on our Lord. He leaned on his Master's bosom in their hours of social enjoyment—"And in death they were not divided"—he remained with him till he saw him expire.

We must follow *him* to the *cross*.

II. How did he arrive at this?

He explains this, "We love *him*.—Yes; there he learned the lessons of love on Jesus' bosom.—1—1 Ep.

III. How did he exemplify after his Master's decease? Read his Epistles.—He led others to it (1 chap.). Zeal for God and love for man; a burning fervour for God's cause and man's happiness—"What we have seen and heard we testify unto you."—*Love*.

IV. The particular distinctions and favours conferred on him by Christ.—Leans on his breast.—Mount of Transfiguration—Garden—and he consigns his Holy Virgin Mother to his care—lived long—closed the canon of Scripture—was raised to glory!

SERMON LVII.

THE YOUNG THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL SERMON.

Matthew, xviii., 10.—Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

SYMBOLICAL actions are important. Instances abound in the Old Testament. They were general among the ancients—Jeremiah in chains—Jer., xxvii.—another tears his garments to show the rend of the kingdom. Abijah to Jeroboam, 1 Kings, xi., 30—and another divides the hair, Ezek., v., 2.—Jesus adopted it also, but spake and acted as never man did—breathed on them the Holy Ghost, and washed the disciples' feet. To impress them with docility, &c., “He took a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”—“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”

Seldom did Jesus appear to more advantage; he was aware of the value of children—was severe to those who would have prevented them * * * * * —he has left us an example. It is *impossible* to estimate fully the importance of youth.—It is not beneath our dignity as ministers—*Wesley* kneeled in the street—it is not beneath *yours* either to notice them—Jesus loved them and noticed them.

The importance of youth—we expect little from the old—few conversions there!—iron hand of age!—the young are the hope of the Church—tender plants—trained up by the assistance of the Holy Ghost. Left to themselves, they will become hemlock and nightshade—the grapes of Sodom and clusters of Gomorrah.—But if taken up * * * * * —This anniversary calls upon you to remember your duty here.

I. The interesting light in which the young should be regarded.

II. The manner in which they should be treated.

I. The interesting light in which they should be regarded.

1. As the heirs of future felicity. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Some think that the "*angels*" are their *spirits* disimbodyed:—they mingle with the crowd there. How great this consideration! (Jer., xxxi., 16.) How exalted, then, our view of them! Immortality stamps a value on them beyond words. (James.) Infidelity in vain attempts to shake our faith in this—yet we are alarmed for the rising generation.—Satan is trying to poison them. * * * A child is linked with eternity in the mighty chain; insignificant as he may seem, he will yet vie with angels; there is in him a spirit which will yet praise God forever; yes, their *spirits* shall behold the face of our Father. "An heir of glory"—a frail child of dust. * * * *

2. View them as the charge of *angelic* care. This is the meaning of the verse.—Their guardian angels—ministering spirits: and because of the nearness of connexion between God and these angels, it attaches importance to these children.

We know little of angels; we *do* know they are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, though a veil hides them from us—let the light of revelation be cast on it, and the strengthened eye of faith, and I can see movements there.—See the seraph at the throne. * * * *They* once broke the veil at the incarnation, and think not they have *now* no concern with us—we have our attendant spirits!!

But how can we form an idea of their dignity! It consists in their beholding the face of our Father!—The love of God is the commanding principle of the angelic nature, and they walk in his light, and ascend and descend on men, performing the will of God.—O! the sweep of an angelic mind!—what is their benevolence! they *love* children, great as they are—they think it no dishonour to wait on little children—children in the well—while children are associated, &c.

“Angels now are hovering round us”—the hum of a Sunday-school is music in an angel’s ear—*there* they are in numbers. How much more honour angels’ presence confers than all greatness! A pious child, then, is one of the most interesting objects.

3. The objects of redeeming love.—See the following verse: “For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” They were *lost!* But what means this loss? (Value of the soul.) *Temporal* loss is great.—See Joseph’s bloody coat—agony of a mother’s heart—to hear of her lost sailor boy; or a father’s when his Absalom is gone!—But what is this to a *moral*, a *religious* loss? A *parent* feels this most.—Is Jacob or the father of the *prodigal*, most pitiable?—daily looking out for him! For a pious father to know that his child is lost to the Church, and living to the devil! * * * Instance of a father weeping at the grave. “I weep for one that lives”—breaking my heart * * * A LOST CHILD!!

But the Son of man came to save them! That is the Gospel for little children! for *them* he drank the cup! *they* are the purchase of the blood of Christ.—*One little child* reminds me of Gethsemane! for *it* the Son of God dies!

Remember, also, he is come to *seek* that which is lost. He employs human means. How many have been found by Sunday-school teachers. What was the land fifty years ago?—Bad enough now, but what would it have been if *these seven thousand children* to-day were scattering fire-brands? * * * * But *many* lambs have been gathered.—Sunday-schools have brought many back. Thousands in heaven are now beholding the face of their Father, and God’s house on earth has been filled with their praises. “This my son is found!”

4. The subjects of Divine compassion. Jesus connects them with all the sensibilities of heaven: “Even so it is not the will of your Father that one of these little ones should perish.” Angels love them—Christ died for them—and their Father *will have them* saved.—How fine a representation of the Almighty—listens to a child’s prayer—hush every harp surrounded by glory! &c.—he will look on a little child.—

II. The manner in which they should be treated.

1. The caution expressed: "Take heed." The caution is not useless; even *you* may be in this danger. They *have been* neglected—the Church is guilty—many have grown up children of wrath in consequence—Awful fact!

Why take heed, then? Because angels love them, Jesus died for them, and the Father will have them to be saved. "But I have more important business than to teach in a Sunday-school." I pity the man who thinks so. While employed for them you are working with angels—helpers of God. * * * No employment can *eclipse* the object of saving a soul from death. * * * *Money* given will not do; go out and seek them—the lamb bleats in the thicket, and the wolf is near—fly and save it.

Satan says, "It will lift the children out of their sphere," &c. A liar! What, to open their minds to Divine truth? * * * No; ignorance will harm them, but never will they be injured by leading them to Jesus. Some say, do not trouble the Master with them, &c. "Suffer them to come."

2. The duty implied as well as the caution expressed—do not *neglect* them. There is the danger. Not in *despising* them—*neglecting* them is the damning sin of the world—neglect!! The word *despise* here means *neglect*. (See Dives—one instance of neglect.) No oppression is recorded of him, but he did *no good*.—*Neglect* his crime, *hell* his punishment.—When Jesus judges at the last day, will he exhibit a catalogue of crimes? No: "I was 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*."

3. The consequence anticipated in this neglect. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." You say, "I ought to talk smooth things now. I injure the charity. * * *"—I should esteem your favour, but I value the approbation of my Father. Have not I done my duty? You *have* neglected them—bear with me! Jesus will soon come—he loves these—even unto death. What would you give to Jesus? These children are his representatives.

(State of the schools.) May our Sunday-schools be nurseries for God! *I* cannot move you, but two considerations encourage me—I pray to the Holy Ghost for aid, and then simply lay the cause open to the hidden man of the heart.

* * * * *

SERMON LIX.

THE MORAL ILLUMINATION OF THE WORLD.

A MISSIONARY DISCOURSE.

Isaiah, lxii., 1.—For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

NEAR Jerusalem a range of mountains called Hermon, of which Zion was one extremity, and was enclosed in Jerusalem; on it the Temple was built. This accounts for the connexion between Jerusalem and Mount Zion. On St. Paul's authority we extend the meaning, both emblematical of the Christian Church (Heb., xi.). We interpret the text of the ultimate glory of that Church.—We may consider,

- I. The present implied obscurity of the Christian Church.
- II. Her future and anticipated glory.
- III. The means to accomplish it.

I. The implied obscurity is in the prophet's words. The Vulgate version mends it: "*The Righteous One* and the *Saviour*."—The meaning is the same as that of the general reading, and implies that whenever the *Righteous One* and *Saviour* are hid in the Church there is obscurity, and wherever that Gospel is not preached in which, &c.—*The Righteous One* and *Saviour* are involved in obscurity.

This Gospel is intended for general distribution—"all the world." The apostles and the Jews understood it not, but referred it to Judea and to the Jewish nation. God abolished these prejudices, and then they understood the Saviour's words, and entered fully into the work; they exulted in it: "Now thanks be unto God which always caus-

eth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." *Opposition*, however, is implied in the triumph, but this was overruled—scattered abroad, they went everywhere preaching the word—like the wind it scattered the Gospel seed, and brought forth a hundredfold.—The wilds of the Roman empire blossomed like the rose. Perhaps the temple of God has been gradually rising ever since, though some think otherwise—it may demand a *doubt* whether "he *must* increase" has not been in continual accomplishment.—However, it is certain the light is *comparatively* under a bushel.

We may estimate the present population of the globe at one thousand millions; say six hundred and fifty six millions in the cold, damp grave of paganism—not a unit of millions of Christians among them—the rest are *without Christ!* The earth could not be more cheerless without the sun! One hundred and sixty millions of Mohammedans—coruscations from a marshy soil, leading to the bogs of sensuality. Nine millions of Jews.—Poor people! Their cloud is reversed, and the luminous side is the light to lighten the Gentiles. One hundred and seventy-five millions of Christians: of these, one hundred millions Catholics. One thousand millions!! * * * * *

The lamp out, and a horrid stench emitted behind the scene. (Chesterfield.) Greek Church forty-five millions. Even in that golden candlestick the light but glimmers in the socket.—The remaining thirty millions are Protestants. But if we reckon that *England* is in this number (and other countries), how many of them are Christians in *name* only; how small the circle in which the light shines! Dark, dark, dark! There is indeed danger in our congratulating ourselves too much on success.

We may, however, inspire hope.

II. Her anticipated glory. The burning lamp is a symbol of the presence of Jehovah. Jesus is termed "the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person." Connect both the figures in the text.—The Sun of Righteousness shall go forth like the light of the morning.—Like it,

1. It shall go forth *manifestly*. Light maketh manifest.

The first effect of it in the heathen world is to show their state and danger. * * * God broke the pause of eternity: "Let there be light!"—though still the earth was unfurnished. So the heart is first discovered by the light to be destitute and unfurnished of good, though at the same time filled with every evil temper.*

The same light discovers to them their remedy—"the healer of the breach."—

2. *Irresistibly*—as the light of the morning. The powers of darkness long have reigned, and will engage in opposition—enlist auxiliaries. They will seek another Nero to quench the light of Jesus in the blood of his followers, or another Voltaire, ambassador plenipotentiary of hell. But "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision!" Let them forbid the sun to shine—lock up his bed-chamber, * * * —*Then* may they indulge a hope.—No; not even then. * * * * *

3. *Universally*—as all the earth turns to the sun, all are visited by the morning light. The prayers of thousands *must* be heard—the blood of the martyrs under the altar *demand*s it; he will avenge them in the universal triumph of the Gospel—the spirit of prophecy *declares* it, the bonds of the mediatorial covenant *pledge* it: "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The intercession of the Redeemer *secures* it: "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession." The oath of Jehovah *certifies* it: "*As I live*, every knee shall bow."—"Righteousness shall go forth as brightness" in all the earth.

III. The means by which the work is to be accomplished are indicated in the former part of the text—accomplished by *some one* being prompted to exert his power and voice: "For Zion's sake *I will not hold my peace*, and for Jerusalem's sake *I will not rest.*"

Some think these are expressions of Jehovah.—Correct or

* Clarke.

not, it is a Scriptural truth ; it has long lain near the heart of God ! exerted his power and raised his voice, &c., all for his Church—he deals with every potentate and kingdom in reference hereto.

Others, that Jesus is the speaker—the world is his purchased property through the mediation—but *his own* world received him not. * * * Yet the Father has pledged himself to vindicate his right : “ Ask of me, and *I* will give thee ”—“ *Thou* shalt break them with a rod of iron.”—It is delegated by the Father.

The most common opinion is that these words are Isaiah’s, as a *man of God* and as a *minister of God*. In the same chapter he exclaims, “ Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence. And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”

It is proper to be used by all who mention the name of the Lord—*I*.

Human agency, then, is the means employed.

In *Providence* God helps man by man—*rich* or poor. * *

In *Grace* the same. The word of God is to be carried and *held forth as light*—the ministry of reconciliation is intrusted to man : “ We are ambassadors of Christ ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead be ye reconciled to God.”

The language of the text indicates the *manner* also.

1. It shall be *consistent*—*prayer* and *exertion*—“ not hold *my peace*, not *rest*.”—Thus connected :

2. *Affectionate* exertions also—from a principle of *love* for *Zion’s* sake.—Love is the strongest of all—contribute from this motive. “ For *Zion’s* sake will I not hold my peace, and for *Jerusalem’s* sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.” This ought to be universally adopted by every missionary, every member, every man, woman, child. Let it be *my* motive in addressing you.—

3. *Persevering* “ until the righteousness go forth.”—May we never look back ; the next verse assures us of the certainty of the accomplishment.

* * * Remember what means a God of mercy has employed for *our conversion*. His light has shined into our hearts.

If any are otherwise, it is because they have not come to the light.—We have been exalted like Capernaum. . * *

We are here taught that the same means must be employed for the conversion of others. You say, “May not the heathen be saved without the Gospel?” Admit it; but infer we then that we need send no Gospel to them? Remember the talents.—It was he who had *the one talent* that misused it.—The greater the privileges, then, the greater the possibility of the heathen’s salvation.—Again, remember the Saviour’s warning to Chorazin. * * * What a heart is that which sees no need of sending the heathen light because there may be a *bare possibility* of salvation. The lost traveller in the desert may *possibly* avoid the beasts around, and extricate himself, even if no guide offer. * * * But there are two questions of greater importance than these :

1. Are they actually saved? They have a light within, but they regard it not. The *fact* is against them, whatever the *theory* be.

2. Can *we* be saved if we send them not the Gospel? We are the trustees of the Gospel. (Johnson’s opinion of the man who puts out the light in a lighthouse—same with him who refuses to light it up.) We could light up this beacon—if not, and souls are shipwrecked, “We are verily guilty concerning our brethren.”

* * * If, then, God pardon us the past, let us resolve henceforth to wash our hands in innocency.

God is pouring out a spirit of pity on the world towards the heathen. Could I strike flat the rotundity of the globe, and show you in prospective what is doing, you would exclaim, “We have seen strange things to-day!”—Little groups of missionaries—the banner of the cross waving—one shouting to another—the dying missionary—your own country sending another to catch the standard—the valleys and the rocks shouting to each other, and one universal hallelujah ! * * * * *

This holy war, like all wars, is expensive—special reasons for a large collection. * * * I have come from afar—If we *invite* a beggar, we are *bound* to give.—If you think the committee did right in inviting *me*, *give*; if wrong, *revenge* it not on the cause !

If you gave more to Clarke, then your motive was not love.—An incident occurs to me. “Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into it; and many that were rich cast in much.” Had you been going to the box, what would have been your feelings!—*substance*—and *much*.—There was one *poor widow* who gave all she could—all her living.—The Master is here—if much be given, and much remain behind—he sees you as giving little, &c. Jesus accounts the amount given by the amount of what is left in the purse!!

SERMON LX.

THE BELIEVER IN DARKNESS.

Isaiah, l, 10.—Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God

EXPERIENCE demonstrates the truth of all our preaching, that he who leans on earth leans on his ruin.—Happy if good men were *conscious* of this: and they are so in the same degree as they place their trust in God. * * * “Poverty cannot rob *me*; sickness deprive *me* of strength; darkness deprive *me* of light.”—Some such meaning here. “If you have no light, trust in the Lord!” Here is a certain issue: confide in him—he is yours; however the mind is implicated, he will bring you through; see how he brought Christ to glory!

I. The character mentioned.

II. The circumstances here stated.

III. The directions given.

I. The character mentioned.

First, one who *fears* the Lord, and *obeys* the voice of his servant.

Secondly, he walks in darkness, and has no light!

1. No *spiritual* light? No; he who has Jesus Christ in his heart cannot be ignorant; he is washed in blood! Hu-

man learning is but a shade from ignorance, but they are truly wise who know Jesus Christ. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."—Know him? And where are your sins? Hid.—Where your hopes? Beyond sight.—The darkness in the text, then, is not *ignorance* in the scriptural sense. * * * * *

2. Nor is he miserable. The good man cannot be so. He may have sleepless nights, &c., but not wretched!—There is something in piety that mingles the cup: makes him "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; though poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet possessing all things." No one knows this in *theory*—*experience*.—Feeling trial, and yet enjoying the rest of tranquillity!—the happiness of God which passeth understanding; keeping the mind, &c.—no other end of preaching—sacraments, &c., but to bring them to feel the happiness of Jesus Christ, in the belief of the cross! * * * * *

3. Nor does he walk in the darkness of sin—that cord is in the fire of God's will. He fights against it—no falsehood, deceit, strife, vanity—all the hell of fallen nature.—If you be Christians, sin shall not have dominion over you. Why? You are under Calvary—under grace. You are at least saved from *practical* disobedience, and you are seeking to be *fully* saved.—I read, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from *all* sin." No argument of man can destroy this. * * * * *

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We do not, then, walk in *the darkness of sin*.

The text refers to *Providential darkness*. Heaven leads through mazes. (1.) God often thwarts a good man in his endeavours to get comfortably through the world. He is industrious and active, and yet the torrent goes against him. He compares himself with his more fortunate neighbours.—"No better than I am." "Yet where are my children? *Gone!* my partner *accusing* me! my friends say I am a *hypocrite!* My throne—it is a *dunghill!*" This is *fact*, not *fancy*. He walks in darkness indeed!—How often God resumes what he gave!

(2.) How often are the children of good men thorns in their

sides? Like Eli, they taught them *well*, but when they looked for piety and affection, they found *impiety* and *disobedience*! They reprov'd in affection, hoping to conquer by love.—Age ought to command respect—yet their eyes wax dim and their gray hairs are brought down with sorrow to the grave: in *one day* all perish together! Did ever lovely blossoms end in such a blight!—brought up for the *church*! See David! the idol of his soul murders his brother—aims at his father's crown, his father's *life*! The parent flees, hunted by his child!—See the saint of half a century pass Kedron, ascending Mount Olivet. Twelve thousand pursue him, and the *king* only is to be smitten. Absalom commands.—Hear the father: “Repel the foe, but deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom—he is my son.”—The messenger flies to inform David of the defeat.—Deaf to all this—“Is the young man Absalom safe?” if he is preserved, it is better than victory! But no!—“O Absalom! my son! my son!” * * * Gibbon says a man can only live to posterity in three ways: in his children, in his works, or in the enthusiasm of Christianity. When a man loses the first, O how *much comfort* is gone! “If I be bereaved of my children I am bereaved.” * *

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(3.) The darkness may be great and oppressive—weakness of body. * * * But whether God takes what he gave you, &c., whatever darkness, here is the cure! * * * (The FATHER purges—yet you cannot take the knife to Isaac.)

III. The directions given.

Trust in the *name* of the Lord—his *power*, *benevolence*, *fidelity*.—Witness the record—look at the past, and see how he led thee. Stay upon thy God! Fine figure!—*practical religion*. Stay is a prop to a weaker vessel to support a stronger. Lean on God! rest on the mighty! The man of faith holds him in the promise: “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.”—Faith is what he stands on; it is the substance, the basis, from which he plays all his engine. (Habakkuk.)

See the fact—*Joseph*! When his father hungered, he heard the rumbling of Joseph's wagons. Jacob *stayed* on God.

But the reason of the thing requires it.—The veracity of God!—a delight in the confidence of God which none can rob us of.

When the heart fights within—enemies many—table spare—live to God, and nothing can harm you. “I am in *his* hand,” said Wesley—“in the hollow of it!” or, as Taylor said, “In the enclosure and encirclings of the Lord”—“He will never leave you.” But if not in his hands, you cannot confide in him.—Make this point sure. * * *

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SERMON LXI.

APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

Colossians, i., 29.—Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

EVERY man should have some determinate end of action, and true wisdom consists in adapting the best means to the best end. Now the Apostle Paul shows us here the *end* of all his works.—The man who has no fixed, unalterable principle, uses not his reason; he has not attained to the dignity of human nature.—Some have this end in view, and others *that*, but the noblest end of our being is that at which the apostle aimed.

I. The end which the apostle proposed to himself.

II. His work as connected with that end.

III. The principle, the only true one, by which he sought to accomplish his object.

I. His end was the salvation of immortal souls! an end worthy of Saul of Tarsus—worthy of the Great Apostle of the Gentiles! His mighty mind could grasp no less an object. It is the end which God proposes to himself; the end he had in view in the gift of his only Son! the end of all his dispensations to the sons of men. This alone is an object worthy of a creature who was made for God! it is the true dignity of human nature!

And shall a less design satisfy *me*? Shall *my* soul, born for glory, whose naked birthright is immortality, take up with a lower theme? Shall any other pursuit occupy *my* mind than what occupies the mind of my God? Shall I propose a less object of pursuit than *angels* choose? There is joy among them over one sinner that repenteth, and shall I feel less? No!

But, connected with this end, he sought to make all men partakers of the immunities which the Gospel of Christ offers to all who will embrace them, to bring them to the present enjoyment of the kingdom of Grace, &c.—and to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus—every man to whom he brought the glad news of the Gospel.—He anticipated the day of the Lord, and would present to Christ *every man*!!—*perfect*!

Reflection.—And is it not sufficient honour to be allied with God in this vast work? “workers together with him!” Oh! the glory—the *present* glory—partners with Deity!—And is it not also sufficient *recompense* when we see the travail of the Redeemer’s soul brought in? “Give me *souls*, or else I die!” * * * * *

II. His work was the preaching Christ crucified: “*Whom we preach.*”—Dwell here—This is the great power of God—it is the instrument he employs in the salvation of souls—this is not sufficiently attended to—we lose sight of this great power of God, and hence we are not profited.

Yet, when we look around us, are we not apt to think that God has altered his way of working? How many thousands flock to our churches, and yet what result? The fault must either be in *you* or *us*. God willeth the salvation of all men! And is the fault with *us*? Do we indeed preach in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, or seek we to please men? God knoweth! We preach Christ crucified in all his glorious characters, prophet, priest, and king; and yet God in every one—the equal of the Father, in whom alone is salvation! We preach *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus*! Oh! the thrilling sound! “It charms the hosts above!”—Do we preach with *design*? Do we plan our account to catch souls? Do we expect it daily? Do you hear with *design*,

or is it to please yourselves? Do you suffer the word to enter your very souls?

Reflection.—And is it so that this preaching is the power of God? How should you “take heed how you hear!” How should you bear us up at a throne of grace! Our work is awful—it is arduous: “Brethren, pray for us.”—To whom should we flee but to you? We would lean on the bosom of the Church. When every earthly friend forsakes us, we care not if we can only lean on God’s people. Pray for us: come expecting a present salvation.

Again, if this preaching be so powerful, shall we ever cease our labour of love! No.

“Happy, if with my latest breath
I may but gasp his name!
Preach him to all, and cry in death,
Behold! behold the Lamb!”

Nor shall any suffering prevent our glorying in the cross. As to privations of temporal goods, I account them little; I scarcely give *them* a thought! But in *suffering*, &c.—See Paul: “I am ready to die for the name of the Lord Jesus.” Oh! that I may follow him as he followed Christ. We will count *no sacrifice* too great! “We seek not yours, but you.” What a spirit! I can conceive him before my mind’s eye pleading the cause of heaven.—This leads us to

III. The principle, the only true one, by which the apostle sought to accomplish his object.

St. Paul was peculiarly calculated for his work; his was a *peculiar* work, and we may therefore understand his expression of “the power of God working with him” to include three things:

1. The direct and immediate inspiration of Christ.—Oh! what power working in him mightily!—*feeling* the indwelling of his Lord, and speaking directly the words of Christ!

2. He may allude to miracles, which he had the power of working in attestation of the truth.

3. The abiding influence of the Holy Ghost. By this I do not mean inspiration, but the comforting, supporting influences of the Holy Ghost to encourage him in his great work.

We see that every true minister refers his success to, and

seeks his power directly from, *Heaven!* “Without me ye can do nothing!” No characters depend more for success in the prosecution of their labour. Though they work, yet it is according to *His* power! * * * *

Application.—To the sinner—and the saved.

1. You cannot throw off the conviction that there is a day of final reckoning; that there only the man who has been employed in *Heaven's work* will be rewarded—the salvation of your own souls and the souls of others. No matter how honourably you may have passed through life, or brought up large families, &c.—The question is, Has the salvation of your souls been the object of your living? The world will be burned up, and you will therefore only be judged in that which abideth forever, “The word of the Lord!” Do you seriously believe this? that there is an eternity. * * * Then the next thing is, set out in the way—every man has an end in view in all he does in this world: we approve your prudence in this.—What makes you sail from this city? you are bound to a *certain* place; it is ascertained—settled. And now use the same prudence in heavenly things. Do you seriously expect to get there? Have you set out? Is it the fixed place of your destination? Are you living with an end in view, a design? * *

Then, if the preaching of the Word is the principle, use this and all the means of grace.—*I* am so weak a creature myself that I need all the help that I can possibly get.—Be faithful in your closets—in your families—at the sacramental table, &c.—and believe every moment for the virtue of the atoning blood.

2. You who are saved, see your security. You can no longer work then. God works in you, but he only wants applying to that he may impart strength.—Oh! may I, as a minister, ever feel my nothingness. May you, as Christians, ever feel yours. Do you now resolve to be for God? *My* heart is fixed; I will lay myself out; I will live with an end in view. * *—Is your heart as my heart? I think I feel it beat *yes!* Lord God, I present thee this congregation.—Oh! that I may be permitted to bear some humble part in presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. * *

SERMON LXII.

THE CLOSE IMITATOR.

1 Corinthians, xi., 1.—Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ

I. *His love to a lost world.*

1. It was Jesus's great concern going about doing good to the bodies and souls of men. Like him, Paul went about. * * * * *

2. In Jesus, how often did these feelings produce tears. "O Jerusalem," &c.—So Paul, Phil., iii., 18: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

3. Jesus was willing to die for a lost world.—So Paul: he wished himself accursed by Christ.

II. *His peculiar love to his Christian brethren, and sympathy with them.*

1. Jesus wept.—Paul, "I mourn with them that mourn," "I weep with them that weep."—"Who is weak, and I am not weak?"—If one member suffered, he felt as if his own body was afflicted.

2. As Jesus in his constant care to keep his followers.—So Paul, "I have espoused you," &c.—"I am jealous over you." * * * * *

3. As Jesus feared his followers suffering: "Let these go their way."—So Paul before Agrippa—he was willing to bear the *bonds*, &c.

III. *His zeal for God's honour and glory.*

1. Peter and he in Galatians—and again, chap. v., 12: "I would they were even *cut off* which trouble you."

2. Elymas the sorcerer.

IV. *His readiness to suffer for God's cause.*

1. Agabus.—We have seen what Paul did suffer; we now see his readiness to suffer more. Phil., ii., 17: "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your

faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." 2 Tim., iv., 6: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."

2. Acts, xx., 24: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." Phil., iii., 10: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

3. Jesus suffered for his brethren.—So Paul, Eph., iii., 1: "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."

V. *His readiness to forgive.*

1. Like his Master, he knew nothing of private resentment; and if he was obliged to use the rod of severity, how painful and how soon laid aside!—Fornicator.

2. "Ye Galatians have not injured me at all."

3. He had that charity which is not easily provoked.

VI. *His humility.*

1. If Jesus could wash his disciples' feet, so Paul "the servant of all." He had a noble mind, which could submit to anything, 1 Cor., x., 33. He sought "Not his own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved."—See how noble in the eating meat. He was the little child.

2. Lycaonia. He counted himself a fool.

3. Submitted to be a Nazarene.—He drank deeply into his Master's spirit. "I am less than the least."

VII. *Uprightness and purity of heart.*

1. Jesus could appeal to his very enemies.—In secret have I said nothing—ask these who were with me.—So Paul could not only appeal to his followers, Acts, xx., 27, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God," but even calls upon his accusers to say aught against him, when before Felix.

VIII. *Paul was a living comment on the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians.*

1. "Vaunted not himself:" "I am the chief of sinners." "Not I, but the grace of God."—"I am the least of the apostles."

2. "Sought not his own"—as in the Corinthian Church.

3. "Envied not."—As Jesus said, "Forbid them not," so Paul envied none who preached the Gospel of Jesus.—He bore all things, believed all, hoped all, &c.

IX. *Resignation to the will of his heavenly Father.*

1. If Jesus could say, "*Not my will*," so Paul, Phil., iv., 11: "Not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content."

X. *Ceaseless love to God's cause.*

1. When by infirmity his active zeal abated, his charity never failed, Col., ii., 1: "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh."—He yearned over the Galatians.

2. If Jesus loved his own to the end, so Paul: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust!"

Lastly. In his death.

As his end approached he became more conformed to Christ.

1. Like him, he lost his followers: "*All* men forsook him."

2. "*It is finished.*"—"I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

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SERMON LXIII.

THE CUP OF SALVATION.

Psalm cxvi., 12-14.—What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?

I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.

GRATITUDE is the noblest of exercises; it is that which has most to do with God and least with ourselves. Repentance, faith, &c.—all respect ourselves; they are the consequences of our fall; but gratitude existed when there was no Eden to deplore, and will continue when repentance

and faith will cease in eternal bliss. David was deeply impressed with a sense of this feeling, as in the text.

I. Let us take a view of God's benefits toward us.

1. The greatest of all his mercies is *sparing* mercy—spared to the present hour. Oh! sinner, art thou grateful that thou art not in hell! What alive! and not grateful for it! Monstrous! Why, Peter calls this mercy *salvation*! Yes, it is a present salvation! and ought to lead thee to repentance! This is its very tendency; it chastens thy feelings, melts thy heart, and woos thee to love Him who has not cut thee down!

2. Thy *individual* mercies. Oh! remember these—call some of them to mind, and confess thy mighty debt! * *

3. Your *family* mercies! Do you count these as *common* mercies? * * * * *

4. Your *national* mercies! Are these *small*? Nay, look around you on others; see how the domestic circle has been broken in upon by the hell-hounds of war, who have witnessed all who were dear, butchered before their eyes! You have only *heard* of these by the hearing of the ear; the half was not told you: your eyes have been spared the sight.—These mercies are thine, oh *sinner*! Though thou hast not called to thy God, he has called to thee! Though thou hast been unmindful of him, he has not been unmindful of thee!—he has been lavish of his love! Why to thee this waste of love? Ask, &c.

5. Look at thy greatest mercy, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is an *unspeakable* gift—all description of it is vain! He bled—he groaned—he died—that thou mightst live! Trace thy temporal mercies to this source; why thy sparing mercy? Because he has cried, “Spare them another year.” * * * * *

But look at your spiritual mercies! Many here can trace streams of spiritual comfort flowing into their hearts the past year, back to the very fountain; this fulness of love! this ocean without bottom or shore!

1. *Pardoning* mercy.—2. *Adopting* mercy.—3. *Sanctifying* mercies.—4. *Refreshing* mercies—in short, soul-saving

mercies! Oh! how great is his mercy to pardon!—how much greater to *adopt*!—Mercy of mercies!

“How can it be, thou heavenly King,
That thou shouldst us to glory bring,
Make slaves the partners of thy throne,
Deck'd with a never-fading crown?”

Some of you have experienced these in the past year. Do you begin to feel them, and are you now saying, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?” This is the immediate cry of such a soul! It thinks of *giving back*, as the word means.

II. See what David renders. Three things:

1. I will take the cup of salvation, or the cup of deliverance. When God had saved from any calamity, the cup of thanksgiving was taken—drank first by the head of the family, and then handed round; it was a cup of gratitude. Now, in our dispensation the eucharist has taken the place of this; and of all terms to signify this ordinance, this is most proper—Eucharist—a cup of thanksgiving. I wonder that this ordinance is so much neglected.—What! God blessing you continually, and you never commemorating it by taking the cup of deliverance? 'Twere no wonder if God should cease to bless, as you cease to acknowledge his blessings. The infidel may laugh, but I cannot but admire many of the regulations of the rubric on this head; as, a woman after delivery—her first place of public resort is to be the communion-table. Oh! how sweet the feeling! acknowledging the hand of God by taking the cup of deliverance, of thanksgiving!

Again, after marriage the first public act is to be at the Eucharist.—Again, on the coronation of his majesty; taking the cup of thanksgiving. Oh! this is the way to return love for love! to kiss the hand that blesses you! looking on the Eucharist as a memorial of thanksgiving. I know not how a Christian can reconcile to his conscience the neglect of it. (Wesley's first meeting with Fletcher!)

Oh! that men were always impressed with the sense of their mercies; and they *would* be always impressed with eucharistical feelings, and ever ready to every good

work! It is true, many prostitute this ordinance, and take this cup as an unmeaning ceremony; but if you feel your mercies, take the cup of thanksgiving frequently.

(Persons might go to the communion-table at a much younger age than custom has warranted—a child can love God!)

2. I will call upon the name of the Lord—I will invoke the name of the Lord! This custom was always among the faithful: the cup of deliverance should always be taken with invocation. *Name* is here put for the thing itself—I will call upon the Lord! I will give him ceaseless thanks in ceaseless praise! Oh! how natural is this! I am delivered from evil; I look up to my deliverer, and the involuntary “*I thank you*” echoes from the feelings of my heart within. God has delivered me from ten thousand deaths, and my heart is ever breathing, “O Lord, I bless thy gracious power”—“I will call upon thee as long as I live.”

3. “I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.” The practice of making vows to Deity has been found to exist in all ages, savage and civilized. Is the party in danger or in any hazardous undertaking? he vows to his God that, if he will deliver him, he will make him a sacrifice. Now, have not you made vows to God? Remember! you were in trouble—in danger—at the point of death—your wife, husband, child was about to be removed—think! You promised God a sacrifice, and that was the sacrifice of yourself! Have you paid your vows? Man, the vows of thy God are on thee, and they are unpaid. Oh! tremble, lest a worse evil overtake thee! God heard thy vow—he delivered thee—he registered thy vow on high. It yet stands open, unliquidated! Now, says David, I will pay my vows—*now*; I conjure thee to do the same! Oh, say you, I will offer myself to God in private, but in the great congregation I will not—I will not make a *show* of my religion. What, ashamed of paying thy vows to God! *thy God!* When danger surrounded thee wouldst thou have cared if all the earth had seen or heard thee make it? But remember, all *heaven* heard it! and wilt thou be afraid of a *worm*? Thy mercies were pub-

lic; they were performed for thee in the presence perhaps of thousands, and God expects a *public* acknowledgment.

“But thou wilt keep thy religion and thy vows of it to thyself.” God will not accept of this; he will be glorified by a display of thy light, if such be in thee—a *public* display. Thou art deceived by a voluntary humility; art not thou ambitious of the honour implied in these words, “Ye are my witnesses!” Confess him before men, that thou mayst be the child of God!

These vows were made for you during your minority, in the public assembly when at the holy font—and hence I admire public baptism. Private baptism was never practised in the primitive days, and it is the corruption of Christianity if it be practised now. It is almost done away. You were brought to the holy font, and the vows of God were then put on you. It is well this is called a sacrament—an oath. You are bound to God by an oath! You have vowed to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and you are bound publicly from time to time (and what time so favourable as this!) to take this vow upon you! God expects it from you—truth expects it—the bleeding cause of God expects it. The enemies of truth are mighty, and it is the duty of all who love her to stand, to make a stand in her behalf! Resolve in the strength of the Lord! “But you broke your last.”—Well; resolve again! Fight against every hinderance; be faithful; the grace of Christ is stronger than sin, and the stronger will prevail!

Why scruple more at taking this vow upon you than going to the sacrament? This is a vow also. Pay your vows now in the presence of all his people!

A A A

SERMON LXIV.

GOSPEL HOLINESS.

Phil., i., 8-11.—For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

I AM fond of entering into the very spirit in which the apostle writes, that I may *feel* as he felt: it is always profitable, and perhaps the most effectual means, under the Holy Spirit, of causing the blessings, which he wished shed on them, diffused abroad. For want of this being attended to by modern preachers, we lose the spirit of primitive times!

How solemn his asseveration: "*God is my record!*" I call on him to witness—he is ever before me, and reads my heart: he is, then, my witness "*how greatly I long after you all!*" How ardent! He loved them with almost boundless affection!—The idea he wishes to convey is that of a woman in travail. I long—I am in pain for you all till you be safely landed:

"Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in."

"*In the bowels of Jesus Christ.*" It is hardly possible to paraphrase this—the bowels, the compassion of Christ. Oh! the heart of Jesus! the yearning of his bowels over his children! Paul loved them with an affection like this; and let me observe, no man who has not felt the compassion of Jesus, who has not something of his benignity—of his *heart*, something of his sympathies, is qualified for usefulness in the Church of God! I speak to you, not as ministers, but as *leaders* of the flock of Jesus; the lambs you are appointed to lead into the tender grass and beside the still waters of comfort. Seek to have the sympathies of the God-man,

who "can be *touched*," and of his apostle, who says, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?"

"*And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more.*" Doubtless this means your love to each other; but shall we say it does not also mean your love to the Supreme Good? Yea, rather let us say it means first your love to Him, and then your love to each other. Now, he prays that their love may *abound*! It, of course, implies that they had this love, this charity towards God. What is the foundation of this love? "He loved me, and gave himself for me." When the soul believes that truth with the heart, it takes hold on God, for it is the marrow of the Gospel. And let a man feel this saving truth, and he will love the brotherhood; loving the Redeemer, he will love the redeemed. The heart of man is naturally hard; Divine love can soften it; and think not that the heavenly flame, thus kindled in the heart, loses itself amid its kindred fire burning before the throne of God and the Lamb, blending with his holiness; no, it acts upon that from whence it proceeds; the Divine heat softens the hard heart and makes it flow; it diffuses itself to all mankind.

But Paul prays that it may abound "*yet more and more.*" Here is the measure of his love! It is like the stone cast on the smooth sea; it describes first a small circle, it increases more and more, and perturbates all the water, and is only bounded by the measure of the wide abyss! So let this Divine charity find place in the heart of man: the circle is formed, perhaps among kindred spirits, or those joined by ties of friendship and affection; it widens; another and another circle is described; his feelings extend to all—and knows no other measure than the wide extent of God's creation! Now it abounds more and more; it is the love of Christ; and till you can limit the illimitable love of Jesus, or bound his boundless compassion, you can never confine the love of the pious soul towards the children of men!

"*In all knowledge.*" Religion is not a mere excrescence, which grows out of a want of intellect; no; ignorance is not the mother of devotion. Feeling they lacked wisdom, they

had asked of God.—It is Godly wisdom (Styles)—in “*all knowledge* ;” yes, the more we know, the more we love ; the more clear are our views of God in Christ, the more our hearts will glow towards him. Shame to hear persons complain of want of love ; it is because they do not know Him enough.

“ If all the world my Jesus *knew*,
Then all the world *would* love him too.”

Luther said “ everything concerning Jesus is lovely to such a soul—the bloody head, hands, back, feet, heart of Jesus are all lovely—*altogether lovely !*” The cross of Christ—glory in it ! (What is love ? It is the effect produced by an object which appears to me altogether amiable ; my mind draws the picture of his excellences in all their beauty, and produces in me admiration, delight, esteem.—) The more you know him, the more you love him : be not afraid of loving too much. I pity those who fear they can love too much. “ Be not righteous overmuch ; neither make thyself overwise ; why shouldst thou destroy thyself ?” —Wesley was not afraid of the doctrine of perfect love ; this was the perfection he aimed at ; not sinless perfection, but a being made perfect in love ! This is being “ filled with the fulness of God.” The reason of our declension in the love of God is, we do not seek to know him enough. Do you often visit him ? Do you often meet him in secret ? Oh ! he is lovely : he delights to meet with thee in private ; he has things to reveal to thee which he does not unto the world. Go oftener to meet the object of thy love, and thou wilt love him more. * * *

And let me observe concerning this love of God, it is boundless ; there is not a creature under heaven who is not the object of it. If you deny, I put my hand upon the Bible and say, produce your reason. There is *no* being the offspring of his wisdom and power who is not the object of his love ! If there were, I say there is a being who is under no moral obligation whatever to the Deity. If God have always had a hate to him, he is not bound by any moral obligation to God to love him. For what is the requirement ?

Love him because he loved thee! And am I bound to love that object whom God hates? "Ah," say you, "these are in God's eternal decrees, and he alone knows the unhappy sons of reprobation; but I am to love them, and leave the matter to him." And what is this? "I am to love more than God loves!!—I am not bound to love him, nor he to love God! He owes him nothing!" "Yes," say you, "he owes him obligation and gratitude; he has been called into being, and existence is a blessing." Existence a blessing? "Yes, if we were butterflies, ephemerons, creatures made to enjoy a summer's day and sink among the rottenness of decayed nature at night, I would say existence is a blessing. But a being who is eternal! whom God has passed by—and designed for eternal fire!—to say that existence is a blessing!—is the revery of madness—endless fire!" But perhaps you say, "I know those who hold these doctrines, and yet their piety is unquestionable." Thank God! I glory in it; it shows me that they have so much piety as prevents its being injured by noxious creeds; that their hearts are better than their heads; their lives than their creeds; it shows me that, when the love of God has affected the heart, it can forget the creeds of men, and extend its charity as boundless in its degree as is the nature from whence it came. But I wish you to be better instructed; we wish you to have all knowledge. * * * * *

"*And in all judgment.*" The meaning is, in all spiritual *discernment*, that they may know things from things. Now there is an analogy in our minds to our bodies—the five senses are used as applicable to the mind. The man instructed now in all knowledge *sees God!* his faith, realizing the Divine truth—"He loved me, and gave himself for me"—sees it set before his eyes; Jesus Christ set forth crucified for me!—It hears him; the heart is susceptible of every word of God! He "tastes that the Lord is gracious." He smells the odour of the Word of Life—he handles, he touches; and the Divine touch thrills through every power of his soul! He comes into contact with the Deity. He meets God in his word, and he has a spiritual discernment in all things—"he now knows to refuse the evil and to choose the good!"

“*That ye may approve things that are excellent.*”—First *prove* them, and then approve of the more excellent way. Awful fact, that few Christians choose the more excellent way; languor, indifference, &c., comes over them, and there is not a pressing, a following hard after God. Hence, they are scarcely saved; saved on a plank. Oh for the excellent way! My brethren, seek after it. It is not the fervours of human passion which would burn the body for a fellow-creature; but it is the pure flame of the love of God! having full, full possession.

“*That ye may be sincere.*”—In love nothing can be analyzed; it is pure; no flaw, no sunbeam, &c.; “*without offence;*” no stumbling-block.—*Love* was never a stumbling-block. Men have contended about faith and opinions, but the devil could never make love a rock of offence.—If I have the love of God I will not offend him; no, nor any *who is the object of his love*—no man willingly.

“*Till the day of Christ*”—to my life’s end. * *

SERMON LXV.

GOSPEL HOLINESS.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

Philippians, i., 11.—Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

IN our last discourse we pointed out the Christian as distinguished by his ardent piety and unbounded charity; he cannot have too much charity. Who that loves can love enough?—Here three things:

I. His experience, “filled with the fruits of righteousness.”

II. The means whereby they are produced in him, by Jesus Christ.

III. The end of all, “unto the glory and praise of God.”

I. His experience, filled with fruit; and it is mature

fruit, fruits of righteousness. He is here compared to a branch laden with fruit; he is “a fruitful branch”—“a tree whose leaf fades not”—“a tree of righteousness;” and therefore he bears righteous fruit.—Righteousness means right-mindedness; he has come to himself, to his right mind, and where this is it will be seen.

1. *Integrity* is one of these fruits, and not the least—towards God and man; and where *this* principle of right-mindedness is within, it will be seen in candour, sincerity, &c. He gives not his tongue as the pander of another’s fame and character—no evil speaking. View such a man again made upright, he stoops not to the artifices of earth; but, having his mind above the heavens, and his communion with God, oh how upright!

2. Another fruit is *tenderness of conscience*. Oh! how soft, how susceptible of every breath of temptation; the guardian angel of the soul!—Such a man is a decided character; trims not for a moment—does not sacrifice his duty to his interest, as I fear too many do, and ruin their souls! Does an incitement arrive, he guards every avenue of the heart instantly, and without stopping to gaze upon the apple, knowing that sin immediately darkens the eye of the mind, he repels it at once; he sees in the light of God; and his cry is, “How can I commit this great evil, and sin against God?” A man who has not a tender conscience knows nothing of the fruits of righteousness. * * *

Such are some of the fruits of righteousness, but we are to be *filled* with them! filled!—Oh! who thinks of the *extent* of the privileges of the Gospel? The world will, and always did, oppose such a character as this, for it is full of unrighteousness. Oh! says the world, “Why so much ado? we must yield a little—tush; we must accommodate a little,” &c. The world always did reproach such a one; and believe me, it is not one of the least fruits of righteousness to bear the reproach of Christ. The world will let you go on quietly enough if you have no more piety than what pleases them. While you follow the indifferent *rationality* of your neighbours, you will never be reproached; but strike out of the beaten path that leads to death, and you are pointed at. And yet this must be so: a sense of the pres-

ence of God surrounding you, and a view of eternity, will always inspire you with singularity. You will point to heaven, and lead the way. Some say, "Well, you may do as you please; but, if I can get into the lowest place in heaven, I am satisfied: I am not ambitious." Oh! soul! the man who will only walk with Jesus so far as the world keeps pace with him, but will not make one step with him in bearing his cross, is not a *friend*; nay, he is an *enemy* of the way of righteousness. His low ambition grovels yet on earth; "covet *earnestly*" the highest place, the best gift!" Believe me, there is but a hairbreadth line between heaven and hell; and if thou art sporting on the hair, thou wilt drop into the burning gulf!—There must be a "being filled with the fruits of righteousness."

And will any man now oppose Christian holiness? Is not such a character I am describing one filled with the Spirit; and that Spirit is a Spirit of holiness—he is filled with holy tempers and dispositions; saved *from* all sin and saved *into* all holiness—saved into the mind of Christ!—There are many who are fond of their religion in the bulk, but do not attend to its minutiae; they perform the great and pompous things in it, in which the multitude go hand in hand; they are found at church on Sundays, or going to the communion table—but are seldom found conversing with Jesus; they know nothing of the delights of an interview with the King of Kings—sweet prayer is not in their practice. Oh! say they, we attend to our duties, and if we neglected them we should lose our religion.—Yes, your religion consists in your outward duties, and if you ceased to perform them you would be infidels; for you know nothing in religion but what is external; nothing of the religion of the heart. Take away the externals, and prove yourself a Christian—alas! you have no mark.

I. But, say you, how is all this?—"Which are by Christ Jesus"—such a soul is now made a partaker of Christ—not of the Deity, but of the mind which was also in him; Christ now dwells in him, he in Christ; he is one with Christ, as Christ is one with God.—Oh! say you, this is a mere jargon of words without meaning—I cannot help it; they are

not Methodistical phrases; go to your church and hear her read in your communion service—"If we spiritually eat," &c. Now think you that she has any reference there to transubstantiation or consubstantiation? No; the Reformers regarded neither; but there is a spiritual union between Christ and a believing heart, which "no tongue of men nor angels can describe;" yet, thank God, many feel it.—Go you and learn what it means.—Ask of God. * * *

Now by this union with Christ Jesus all the fruits of the Spirit are produced—and it is impossible but that good works must be produced; we are not ashamed to preach the necessity of good works; there is no other way of giving evidence to the genuine character of the religion within us. We see in Christ our pattern, how these can be united; his good works always evidenced what he was. It is fashionable to talk of believing, but show it by your works; "hereby is my Father glorified." Behold a ray of light sporting itself in the atmosphere, and you are led immediately up to the god of day, from whom thousands of millions of rays are continually emitted, and by which his glory is displayed — behold a Christian! his light shines before men; you immediately trace it up in a direct line to the Sun of Righteousness from whence it issued, and glorify *not the Christian*, but his Father, the source of all! they cannot but be produced—all the fruits of holiness.

III. And what is the end of all? "to the glory and praise of God!" God can take delight in nothing but holiness; it is his own nature. What is the happiness of Deity, humanly termed? It is God contemplating his own perfections, his own holiness and infinity—satisfied with himself—this is the highest happiness we can conceive. And what is the pleasure which God takes in his creatures? Inasmuch as they resemble him in holiness, he can take pleasure in nothing else; there must be *inherent righteousness*. I pity the man who would preach against this Christian holiness, and, instead of it, talk of an *imputation* of Christ's righteousness without an *implantation*. Let them cover their sins as they please by a garment of their own fancy; we teach from the word of God that there must be an implanted righteousness

also—"holiness to the Lord." It is the dream of ignorance—it is the foolishness of folly—God can delight in nothing else but holiness—we raised above the ruins of our fall: this alone is to the glory and praise of God. Nay, I contend, God can take no pleasure in anything else at the day of judgment; not we covered under the mantle of an imputed righteousness, and hiding our filthy souls; no, nothing unholy shall enter heaven; nothing sinful! If those who deny this doctrine will show me that it is more to the praise and glory of God to live in sin than to enjoy holiness, I give up the point. Where sin reigns by nature, righteousness must reign by grace, and much more abound; there must be a "being *filled*."

And say not that this is a self-righteousness; it would be so if produced of ourselves; but it is "*by Jesus Christ*;" and our cry in heaven will be, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," and by that sacrifice has *redeemed* us; and worthy is he who has *washed* us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; and let me add, the soul could not be happy nor enjoy God if its sins were cloaked by imputation, and if its righteousness were in another. The soul can only be happy inasmuch as it *possesses* the object of its happiness; no gazing upon the righteousness of another could cause bliss in heaven; but a transformation into his likeness; and the likeness can only consist in righteousness and true holiness.—Do you then go on from grace to grace, filled with the fruits of righteousness, fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God:

"A heart in every thought renewed,
And full of love Divine,
Perfect and right, and pure, and good,
A copy, Lord, of thine."

Thus is God glorified—and Christ will at that day come to be admired *in his saints*; not that his cloak will cover them, but the world will see what the grace of God has accomplished *in* them, as well as *for* them; a people *prepared* for the Lord as well as *saved* by the Lord!

SERMON LXVI.

PETER'S APOSTACY.

Luke, xxii., 61, 62.—And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter: and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

I. THE warning our Lord gave Peter before his fall.

He first spoke generally, that he might not hurt Peter's mind: "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." He then brings it nearer: "*Simon, Simon*; Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for *thee*, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." He *twice* names him; you know what *sifting* is; thus is the soul tossed about when God permits it.—*But I have prayed for thee*; there is *none* who is tempted for whom our Lord does not intercede.

This did not restrain Peter; he was pained to think he could not follow his Lord *now*, he *protests*, &c.—Jesus then thrice fastens home the charge; specifies the *particular crime*, denying him! "Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice." .

What does all this prove? Not that he did not love Jesus, nor was insincere, but that he was ignorant of his weakness; this led to self-confidence, this to security, and this to his fall—he clung like the ivy to the oak, and determined that the lightnings of heaven which might blast the one, &c. *

Jesus leaves every one without excuse; he warns of the temptation and gives grace to sustain it, and no man need fall into it; the Spirit of God is afforded, &c., &c.

See how he reproves him in the garden! he takes the

three who witnessed his transfiguration.—Peter had professed his readiness to die! Jesus singles him out of the slumbering disciples. “*Peter,*” couldst not *thou watch* (only *watch*) one hour! How full of meaning!—He again reproves him in the garden; Peter drew his sword: “*Put it up;*” it would expose Peter to death.—Our Lord shows him that no such proof as *that* would satisfy of his sincerity; acts, more like the Gospel he taught, must evince it.

II. Observe the fall! Sin has its gradations.—To present Peter with the horrors of blasphemy *at once* would be absurd. But see!

1. *He follows afar off!*—Unlike John, who reclined—*yet he loved*—fear and affection combined.

So the believer; he is ashamed of introducing Christ into company, or of reproving sin; he loves him, as Peter did, he cannot give him up; but ah! far off! (The pious Hervey would go nowhere but where his master was welcome.) Having left the company of God’s children.

2. *He gets into evil company;* after being admitted, he did not adhere to Jesus as John did; he warmed his hands and feet, but oh! his heart was cold! soon the maid who let him in challenged him, “this is one of them;” disarmed by his very self-confidence—what an opportunity to confess Jesus! Now Peter! poor Peter; he has begun to lose his love, and he denies him.—Constables and maid-servants were no company for an apostle except when delivering them the message of salvation. “Evil communications corrupt good manners”—sin gathers strength; another maid comes, and her testimony is borne to try a man; “thy speech bewrayeth thee;” *an oath is added!* not know him? Why all Jerusalem know him! more likely to make him still more suspected, since a *stranger* in Jerusalem might have known these things. Peter’s very defence to the second attack made way for the third; he denied with *an oath*—a proof he was *a liar*, as all swearers are—the cock cried out thou liest—the very tone in which he answered—angry; why angry, Peter?—The speech confessed him a Galilean! the third attack comes, “that very dialect of thine,” &c. Perhaps he was talking of Jesus, and his anxious look might mani-

fest the interest he took in him. A kinsman of Malchus recognises him.—Oaths and *curses* succeed, and he horridly denies Jesus! What, Peter? Wast thou not on the mount with him? Didst thou not see his glory? (Trace the remarkable favours shown Peter, &c.) Yet he swears! Infatuated Peter! thou art beside thyself.—Why, Malchus's kinsman is here! *the fear of man!*!

Oh! how sin gathers strength as it rolls along; thus he who a short time before was called "*blessed*," now denies his dear Lord and Master! This is the effect of entering into the temptation; when this is done, it is impossible to say where you will stop. Flee it as the face of a serpent! Yea, as hell fire!

Do not deny the charge; let your speech prove you a Galilean—too Methodistical.

SERMON LXVII.

THE PEOPLE OF GOD DESCRIBED.

Isaiah, xl., i.—Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

THE prophet had been declaring the sins of the Jews, and, therefore, denouncing God's judgments on them. But he now commences in another strain; instead of continuing these topics, he changes his subject, and begins to show the great privileges to be derived in the Gospel dispensation.

I do not mean to say he never mentions the revelation of this glory in any of the preceding chapters, or that all the succeeding parts of the book are void of complaints against the people; but the *great body* of each end of this prophecy treats on these two subjects.

We are not to suppose that the prophet did by choice leave off the declarations of God's judgments, or that it was painful or wearisome to him to deliver *that* part of his commission; no, it was equally his choice, but he acted under God's direction. It might expose him to greater persecutions; but he was not answerable to man for the mode or matter of his delivery, but to God only, and therefore he

faithfully delivered *all* his counsel. Herein he has left an example to all succeeding ministers. God's true ministers are not sent by the people, nor are they amenable to them, but of God! and to him they must answer. It would be wrong to account all to whom our message is sent as *just* persons, and address them with *comfort* as such. I should sin against God if I were to address you all as saints, and thus daub you with untempered mortar: the children's bread must not always be given to strangers; but we must "cry aloud and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression and their sins;" and the revelation of *the wrath of God* must be declared against the sinner!

But yet there is another part of our commission; the same Being who has commanded that has also said, "Bind up the broken-hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" and "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people," &c.

Although the *people* may mean the whole Jewish Church, yet we shall restrict the exhortation to the *true people* of God!

I. Who are God's people?

II. The address to such.

I. Now, in speaking of them, we shall not multiply descriptions of their character, or *all* the marks by which they are known; the fewer we use, and the better, and the easier brought home, provided they be *prominent*, and we can easily distinguish them.

Now, the people of God are they who *fear, love, and obey* him. Propose that to any man, and he will readily assent; but this vague assent will not do; bring it to the touchstone of Scripture; and in proof of this I shall adduce the authority of Moses, David, and Jesus Christ.

Moses—Deuteronomy, xxviii., 58, and elsewhere: and God, when he delivers his law to them, exclaims, Deuteronomy, v., 29: "O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments

always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever !”

David—“Blessed is the man that *feareth* always ;” “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” “O fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him.”

Jesus Christ, after cautioning his followers against the fear of man, says, “I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear : Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say unto you, fear him.”

I speak not here of *slavish fear*, but *filial fear* ; that fears to offend not because of the punishment, but whose cry in every temptation is, “how can I commit,” &c.—Have *you* this fear ? I do not say, do you ever feel the reproofs of conscience, &c.—this you may do, and often *dread* when you see the conclave of hell, and behold the lake of fire waiting to devour. I care nothing for that ; the devils fear, and I believe many who are posting to ruin have often this fear ; but is yours a *filial* fear ? do you fear to offend God because it would *grieve* him ? is it a *godly* fear ? This is a fear consistent with the highest state of grace, and we are to perfect holiness in the fear of God ; and in the highest fervours of devotion, when wafted on the spirit’s gale to heaven, this fear is necessary to repress the rashness of love, &c.

Love—Moses : “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”—Many, in speaking of the law of Moses, speak of it only as a code of ceremonies, &c. ; they forget the moral law ; this is binding on us ; religion must always be the same ; it can never alter.

David : “I love the Lord because he has heard my prayers !” here he professes his love, and declares the cause of it. Nowadays a man is thought more fit for Swift’s Hospital* who would profess to know that God hears his prayers ; yet David *knew* it, or he could not declare it, and there is no man who prays sincerely but shall in due time *know* that God hears his prayers !

* An asylum for lunatics

Jesus Christ being asked which was the greatest commandment, answers (as did Moses), "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," &c. ; and the second is like unto it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," &c. ; yes, this is actuated by the principle which moves the first, supreme love to God, and sincere love to our neighbour.

Do you love God? Oh! say you, surely there is no one but loves God! nay, my Bible says there are some who hate him; "sinner, thou art the man;" we cannot omit these things. Perhaps one says, I *hope* I do. This is nonsense; apply it to a human case; would it be an answer for a husband, a wife, a child to make? No; you would answer directly, for you *feel* you do. 'Tis so with the people of God; they *feel* they do; 'tis not a conclusion drawn from abstract propositions, logical reasonings, &c., but it is an affection of the mind; he *feels* it. There are many who decry these things and deny it. They think religion and the feelings it produces, are not in the passions which we have by nature, and that all we can reasonably expect is to *hope* we are safe! and to *hope* that all things will be well! Oh! be not deceived with vain words; no new affections or passions are given in religion; the same natural feeling by which I love my wife is as when I love my God; they differ only in the *object*, and the man that loves God *knows* it as sensibly as he would if he loved his *friend*! Believe not that religion is a mere physical nothing, which grows up as a child to its maturity of manhood without his being conscious of it. We *know* that we love God by his Spirit given to us.

But I would here guard against the danger of injuring any one's feelings. I would say comfortable words; there are some so much pressed down by bodily infirmity or *nervous diseases* as to be at times doubtful of their states. Such may observe, there are various marks in one who loves God which cannot be clouded with the garments of any sorrow. *First*. One who is his, will delight in his company; he will feel a love for private prayer, for shutting out all sensible objects, and conversing with the Invisible God! We shall always desire the company of those we love! *Second*. Such delight when He is the subject of conversation, (I do

not plead for religious gabbling ; such have not much piety, and it is not always right to force the subject of religion. But there may be a persuasive way of introducing it ; and if you associate at any place where you cannot introduce it, go there no more.) *Third.* Such would not offend God ; put the question to their hearts, and they find it is not repelled ; they delight in his pleasure. Now these proofs may satisfy the poor afflicted that he is “ in the people of God,” though so much dejected.

Serve or obey—Moses, when he received the law, he asked the people, Will ye obey all these things ? They promised, and he took the blood of the covenant and sprinkled on the people and on the book. When God by his prophet reprov'd his people he said, When did I command you to offer to me burnt-offerings, &c. ; to obey is better than sacrifice. I told you to obey. This idea is heightened by reflecting that God did actually call on them to offer burnt-sacrifice ; but he shows that in *his* esteem it was *nothing* compared with *obedience*. But many will say this is all legality, and not Gospel ; was not the Mosaic dispensation one of *grace* ? Yes, verily, everything since the fall was a dispensation of *grace*, and no enactment since then implicitly—“ *Do this and live!*” Nor are these charges to obedience confined to that dispensation ; they are brought into the Gospel : “ If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

Do you obey God ? I ask not the *drunkard*—and who is he ? any man who sips and sips, and unfits himself at any moment of his life for the more serious act of devotion. God has given me his good creatures, but for my use, not abuse ; merely to strengthen my body, not to please my appetite, and I am “ to eat and drink, and whatever I do, do all to the glory of God.” Such men are not to be brought under the feet of their senses. I ask not the *swearer* ; his actions declare he is for hell, and not obeying God. I ask not the man who would *take advantage* of his neighbour's ignorance, &c., and defraud him. No ; but do *you* obey God ? What do I mean by obeying God ? In all your actions do you ask, is this pleasing or displeasing to him ? and do you thus seek to know his will, and act up to it when you know it ;

taking no step in which you do not feel his approbation? Set him before you all your lives, and ever act under his guidance. Can you say with David, Oh! how I love thy law!

This is the man who obeys him, and these are his people. And this is also the *order* of their doings. They first fear God; they see the sentence of death has passed upon them; they are pointed to a Redeemer; they now love God because they feel he has loved them; and the blending of these two produces obedience. * * * *

SERMON LXVIII.

THE NATURE AND IMPORTANCE OF CONVERSION.

James, v., 19, 20.—Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

Let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

CONVERSION is a subject which concerns *every one* without exception, and is a subject of the very first magnitude!

- I. The nature of conversion.
- II. The importance of it.
- III. The means by which it is assisted (effected).

I. Man is naturally *perverted*: all the powers of his soul are in a wrong direction, &c., &c.

And this is the state of all men through sin, “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” There are two kinds of sinners; those who never knew the way of peace, and those who have known and departed from it. Peter’s change is called *conversion*; these are what St. James especially means or names; but the same truth is applicable to all.

Conversion is much controverted by various professors; let us show, then, first what it is not.

1. It does not consist in a name of Christianity, in an attachment to this or the other persuasion. It is possible to

have a name to live, and yet be dead. "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Many professors walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that "they are the enemies of the cross of Christ," &c.

2. Nor does it consist in the entertaining orthodox opinions on matters of religion, nor changing from erroneous views of the subject to orthodox creeds. This is not the conversion of the *Bible*, or of the Spirit of God; it is one of man's judgment, and is good in itself.

We do not condemn this, for we are far from thinking that it is a matter of indifference to which community you are attached or what creed you hold.

3. Nor does it consist in a reformation of life; it is possible even to go thus far; to be turned from a libertine to a man of regular deportment, &c., and yet not be converted. Many are the views which cause this change; some are of *interest*; but others, who from a conviction of their judgment, have cast them off; this is better; they have saving *faith* in a degree; it has place in the judgment, and has operated in the *life*: when they shall have believed with the *heart*, it will operate *there*.

(1.) Conversion is more than all this—(Flavel)—it is no less than an entire change from the love of sin to the love of holiness, from the power of Satan to God. Self is renounced, and God is now his supreme end, &c. His will chooses him, his understanding contemplates him, his heart adores him, &c.—(Boyce.)

(2.) This change of all the powers of the soul produces conversion of *life*. As he once yielded his *members* servants to sin, so he now yields *them* servants to holiness. His animal nature is moved by the spring of all true obedience within him, and *God moves in him!*

This change is very conspicuous in persons who have been openly profane; the change is with them as a new creation, and they are called new creatures! &c. But in some who have had the restraining grace of God from infancy, it is not so manifest to the world; but, however, the individual has the testimony of his own conscience bearing

him witness with the Holy Ghost that he is now truly a child of God. This new life is a *hidden* principle; but, nevertheless, it is accepted in the sight of God, who reads the heart and sees the sincerity; and on that day the secrets of his heart shall be made manifest.

II. The importance of it.—Great is its importance.

1. “*It will hide,*” &c. Many have mistaken this, and applied the phrase as applying to the man who is the means; but it is incorrect, for conversion is what must be effected in *every one*, that their sins may be blotted out. David calls it, “the Lord imputeth not sin”—again, “his sins are covered”—again, “blotted out;” the conscience is washed.—See on Acts iii., 19 v.

(1.) It shall hide all his past transgressions, and,

(2.) Prevent all those sins which might otherwise have been committed.—So much dishonour to God thereby prevented! At the last day the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest.—Oh! what a disclosure! If we are often anxious here to keep the public mind from the contemplation of crimes, as it shocks humanity, see its propriety there.

2. “*It will save a soul from death.*” Not from natural death. All must pay this debt by Adam’s sin; but it will save a *soul* from death, which is of more consequence than a *body*.

(1.) From *spiritual death*, that awful state in which a man is dead in trespasses and sins; it will quicken him with Christ.

(2.) From *eternal death*, everlasting perdition, the second death.—Oh! how great the deliverance from eternal death! the value of a soul!—Estimate it; count its price!—He shall save a *soul* from death!

III. We must recollect that from first to last the glory redounds to God; it is by his agency it is effected.—The *Father* drawing the soul to seek his peace in him; alluring him by repeated operations upon his spirit and melting him into love.—He then gives them to the *Son*; the sinner, seeing his need of a Saviour, is brought to the cross; and as he had believed in God, is now exhorted to believe also in Jesus.—The *Holy Ghost* then takes of the things of the *Father*

and the Son, and reveals them unto that soul, bears witness with their spirits that they have believed aright, and gives them joy in the Holy Ghost through believing. (Oh! that men would preach the acts of the Holy Ghost more, for this is specifically *his* dispensation.) Thus the triune God is concerned in our conversion, and is the grand cause!

But God does not act on men *arbitrarily*, but *impressively*; he could change a soul by his own power; but human instruments are employed by him — true, in some cases he works without them; in remarkable outpourings of his Spirit conversions have taken place without human agency, and the libertine has become the servant of Christ.

But in the ordinary course of his dealings he employs agents,

1. Often by those who have tasted the heavenly food, and who long to communicate it to their friends and neighbours; they invite them to come.

2. But especially by men set apart, the ministers of his truth—"who, knowing the terrors of the Lord, persuade men."—See what Paul says of them.—The Methodist ministry has been particularly owned of God; their labours have been more abundant, working night and day to spread the savour of his name; visiting wretched hamlets, &c., &c. (State the labours of our preachers.)

It would not become me to speak of these things, were it not to magnify our call, and to answer those who speak and write perverse things.—Though we therefore speak as fools, yet as fools let us boast a little; we sought no man's gain, we wronged no man, we preached not for filthy lucre; God is our witness — we may lie under odium; but the day is coming when God will justify his servants and confound their adversaries, &c., &c., &c.

What will then be their honour! they have saved souls from death—souls for whom Jesus died—souls, the most valuable things in the universe!—and, on the other hand, have covered so much of that dishonour which sin reflects on the Divine character, by hiding a multitude of sins! Oh! the welcome that their spiritual children will give them, and the rejoicing that their deeds of iniquity are hid from every eye!

SERMON LXIX.

THE SOLEMN ASSERTION.

Romans, viii., 8.—So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

PAUL, in writing to the Thessalonians, says: “We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We rejoyce to bear the same testimony, &c., and we do rejoyce that we can do it with *many of you*; but untrue if we so speak of all; many of you are mere hearers.—Who is in the fault? “Ye know how we exhorted and comforted, and charged every one of you as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.” Ye are yet in the flesh, &c.

- I. Consider the characters mentioned in the text.
- II. The solemn assertion—“they cannot please God.”

I. Consider the characters mentioned in the text.

1. By the term *flesh* we must understand the corruption of our fallen nature. (See 9th article of the Church of England.)

This principle or depravity is termed *flesh*, for various reasons,

1. Man being composed of flesh and spirit, when he is in an unregenerated, unconverted state, the spirit is dead and he is then in *the flesh*.—(So when God said to Noah.)—Such a man lives for earthly purposes, delights in carnal and worldly pursuits, and is not alive to those spiritual enjoyments and elevated purposes for which God designed him.

2 The corruption of our nature is termed flesh because it

adheres so closely to the soul of man. His infirmities and natural disobedience are not occasional; but a part of him and identified with him. Nor can he be mended, but created anew; and God alone, by the sacrifice of his Son, enables him to destroy it.

3. The corruptions are so near and dear to us—"No man hateth his own *flesh*."—Sin so dear, he clasps it, though death be the consequence.

4. Because in many instances particular sins are constitutional, and because the members of the body are employed in executing the wishes and desires of our carnal appetites and inclination.—Those sins entailed by the fall, from some particular weakness of body, may be termed *fleshly* sins, and those in commiseration of which "we yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin"—"as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness."

5. But the most important reason, and that which renders the term peculiarly appropriate is, that our sin and corruption is innate. Not by imitation—but the stock of Adam: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."—"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned!" This is the doctrine of Scripture, and should not be departed from until the impugners thereof produce a better.

"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." So the entailment of these natural sins and crimes constitutes us of the flesh, and so must continue until born again of the Spirit.

Thus it is not difficult to discover the character—those who are not in the Spirit, are dead to the spiritual enjoyment of Christ; as we remarked, the spirit being dead constituted us of the flesh; so the flesh being dead constitutes us of the Spirit: "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness." In some cases a man may be partially alienated from the world, partly attracted by the Gospel—but carnal inclinations occa-

sionally predominate, which shows that *the flesh remains in him*. Still there is a material difference between him and the man who is emphatically flesh—absorbed in the pursuits of the world, lost in its pollutions.—*He is in the flesh*—surrounded and governed by it; he neglects the drawing of the Spirit; his affections are devoted to the flesh; his will is corrupt and governed by the flesh: walks after the flesh, sows after the flesh, reaps after the flesh.

II. The solemn assertion—they cannot please God.

1. He cannot in any Scriptural sense please God, nor claim his blessing. He may acquire the good opinion of his neighbours for usefulness, the gratitude of his country for patriotism, thanks of the world for the exertions of genius, possess the endearing love of his family for domestic virtues, yet he cannot please God if in the flesh—which is still possible. Unless he is made a new creature, he cannot claim the favour of Heaven. He must be justified by *faith*, and made a new creature *in Christ Jesus*. The righteousness of *works* which he was establishing must give way: “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be;” and that which is at enmity cannot please him. * * *

2. But this affirms great misery on all who are in the flesh. Possessed of superior powers for the enjoyment of God, yet destitute of it, and under his frown whose favour is life. God cannot admit such to the enjoyment of his blessing. Do *you* admit into your company and society those who are your professed opponents and enemies, who use every endeavour to bring into disrepute your word and character?—Such professors may live in the church; but to them God’s ordinances are dry, &c.—clouds without rain, &c. To the spiritual man they drop manna, &c.; to the fleshly, a barren desert; and if here you remain, accustomed to deceive yourselves by attendance on the ordinances, it will be death to you: “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” O think of that dread moment when mercy is shut out. The edict of the Lord is gone forth, and he thinks of it no more but in evil. Such

has been the dread resolve of Heaven; but it now remains in your power to avert it, through Christ Jesus.

3. But we may consider the awful assertion as implying a fatal inability, while in the flesh, to please God, because they do not do the will of God. He wills our salvation, and the circumstance of being in the flesh is contrary even to his command.

The causes of this inability are not *physical*, but *moral*; the brute animal labours under physical inability; but there is a spirit in man capable of better things. Religion is proposed to man as the grand business of his life. We are endowed with conscience to detect—will to choose.—We have every physical power requisite. But how is it we do not choose God? Because we are morally defective—in *the flesh*.—

We cannot please him, because we are defective in *motive* also, as well as *power*. * * * * *

But our inability is not invincible. * * * * *
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SERMON LXX.

THE NATURE AND EXCELLENCES OF THE GOSPEL.

1 Timothy, i., 11.—According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

It is pleasing to contemplate God as the Father of the human race, and see the means adopted for the welfare of the family. “He made of *one* blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth,” and gave all a rational and immortal soul—loving to every man, &c.—always consulted the happiness of man—air, water, &c.—“gave all things richly to enjoy”—“filling the heart with food and gladness.”

But see man a candidate for immortality—hence He has revealed His will; and although given gradually, yet clearer, &c.—to the perfect day; yet all the rays were from the same source, Hebrews, i., 1, 2: “God, who at sundry times,

and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds :” and as the Gospel emanates from God, Paul well calls it, “According to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.”

I. The nature of the Gospel—the Gospel means the whole history of Jesus—but more limited, the system of mercy provided for man through a Mediator—the Gospel is founded on the fall—“all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ;” and experience confirms it, from the world’s girdle to the frozen pole ; if we ascend the stream of time, the truth forces on us—death reigns over all !—God, as the moral Governor, is bound to punish sin—he cannot see it with indifference—“his wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness,” &c.—see the Gospel—glad news—offers salvation.

1. It makes known the Saviour (enlarge on Isaiah, lxiii., 1)—“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

2. It not only reveals him, but offers salvation in his name from the guilt and power of sin : the Gospel supposes we are in danger, and saves also *from* the fear of death and the damnation of hell, and *into* peace, purity, &c., and reveals to us our final glorification.

3. In it the terms of salvation are clearly revealed—they are such as accord with our rational nature—not penances, &c.—It does not require us to ascend into heaven, &c.—but the word is nigh thee, &c.—repentance and faith.—In fine, the Gospel is a system of mercy ; “eyes to the blind and feet to the lame—life to the dead.”

II. Its distinguishing excellences : “*glorious*”—the term sometimes means bright, peculiarly excellent—this sense here ; but more particularly it means a display of the wisdom and power of God—it is not confined to the glory on Sinai—but see Moses—it means the riches of his grace made known.—It is the brightest display of the perfections of God

—true, “the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handy work”—true, his glory was displayed in giving the law to the Israelites—they could not look on Moses!—But the Gospel *more* glorious than the law: more glorious in its ministers, design, privileges—blessings—extent—it is the *moon*, but the Gospel is the sun!

See how his *wisdom* is gloriously displayed in the Gospel—sentence has passed on man—the soul that sins must die—this must be executed, or where is God’s *truth*? If executed, where is God’s *mercy*? But see the wisdom of God—he finds out the way himself—Jesus must die, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God”—mercy and truth meet, all the attributes agree, and his wisdom is displayed.

See his *power* displayed in the Gospel:

“’Twas great to speak a world from naught,
’Twas greater to redeem;”

easier that God should draw earth to heaven, than *vice versa*.—See his love, mercy, goodness! they shine with lustre! Herein is love!—Romans, v.

3. All its blessings are peculiarly excellent. Divine truth can only be known by revelation—“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;” but the Spirit revealed them in the Gospel—the atonement, faith, and holiness, &c., &c., bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel and the resurrection of the body, &c.

4. Glorious in its design.—Many are conquerors of nations—thousands of orphans and widows thereby; and yet they covered themselves with glory!—but a glory only worthy Apollyon!—But the Gospel’s design is to *save* (Calvinism)—not a country * * * the *world*.

5. Glorious in privileges.—Sometimes we are attracted by wealth, titles, &c. But, sons of God!—the honour! “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” “If sons, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.”

6. Peculiarly excellent in the moral effects it produces in the hearts and lives of men.—Let the heart receive it by faith, and it operates. Dark? Light in the Lord.—Bound? Chains fall off.—Is the soul like a troubled sea? When the Gospel comes, there is peace.—Is it polluted? A general alteration on the reception of the Gospel. Drunkards made sober, &c.; the soul is then exalted in the scale of being.—Let the Gospel penetrate a foreign land—be they cannibals, idolaters, semi-devils—human nature entirely changed, temples turned to churches, &c.; peace and good-will is among them, and they love each other, &c.

Now God often chooses instruments the most unlikely, which shows the power to be of God.—See Moses with the rod at the Red Sea—speak to the rock, and strike, and waters flowed.—Jericho's walls—blind man and clay—fishermen its instruments, and all the power of the wisdom of the world against it—how unlikely it should prevail!—but the weapons mighty through God, and nations subdued to the obedience of faith.

7. It is glorious in its reward, here, and beyond this world. Describe the New Jerusalem and Him that sits on the throne, and the eternal weight of glory. * *

III. Its Divine authority: "*Of the blessed God.*"—Mention some of his titles as the High, the Holy One that inhabiteth eternity; but no title more endearing than this. *Blessed—happy and glorious* in himself, yet he formed man to communicate a portion of his own happiness, and then gave *the Gospel to restore him* (two senses of *blessed*).

Now it is *Divine*—its purity and design prove this: it has the marks of human credibility on it—it gives names, places, &c.; but more—its Author proclaims its Divine authority—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon *me*," &c. Just men penned it—miracles confirmed it—all these prove it was Divine. The prophecies it contains prove it; part are fulfilled, and others fulfilling—the effect produced everywhere in the hearts of all who receive it, proves this; it is the same in all.

IV. Its design: "*Committed to my trust;*" it is a deposite—"Stewards of the manifold grace of God." 1. Committed to *Christian ministers* in trust. 2. *To all who receive it*

—not the *terms* or *matter* given by way of trust—these are *settled* : but the *dispensation* committed to man that he may enjoy its blessings, &c. And, 3. *To mankind at large* : “The light of the world,” says Jesus—its blessings are suited to man as *man* : it interferes with no civil government, and all who possess the Gospel have it in deposit for others.

Are we partakers of its blessings, pardon, &c.—else the Gospel will condemn us ; it will be the condemnation of the world.—This is the sin of the world, “That light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin ; but now they have no cloak for their sin.” God offers you pardon in it : “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Cast your souls on the atoning blood.—If pardoned, seek its highest blessings—endeavour to communicate it to others :

1. Our children.
2. In the town.
3. In the country.
4. In the kingdom.
5. All the world.

SERMON LXXI.

THE CHRISTIAN RACE.

Hebrews, xii., 1, 2.—Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

THE subject the Christian race—all men are candidates—but those only to be considered truly in this light who have entered the lists—all *Christians*.

- I. The race—'tis one of,
 1. Christian knowledge.
 2. Christian experience.

3. Christian duties.
4. Christian sufferings.

The phrase implies,

1. Exertion.
2. Progression.
3. Perseverance.

II. The duties connected with it.

Lay aside every weight—sin of every kind—but particularly,

1. Attachment to the company with which formerly connected.

2. Love of the world, and inordinate attachment even to our lawful calling.

3. Improper fear of man—accommodation and compromise of the fear of God.

And the besetting sin !

III. The encouragement afforded.

1. The cloud of witnesses.

These are *testifiers* as well as spectators.

2. Jesus himself.

And he as an *example* also, “who for the joy,” &c.

Can we be tempted or suffer as he did ?

And remember, we too shall sit down in his throne.

SERMON LXXII.

THOU ART WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES.

Daniel, v., 27.—Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting

THE king in high glee.—Struck pale in a moment.—Context.—

I. Balance the law.

Explain the ten commandments.

II. Balance the Gospel.

1. Repentance.

2. Faith in Christ.

3. Love to God in Christ.

4. Divine obedience.

5. Evangelical holiness.

III. Balance the last judgment.

1. All men raised from the dead.

2. The whole heavens pass away.

3. The world in *flames*.

4. Sovereign Judge seated.

5. Angelic hosts surround *him*.

6. The books opened.

7. The balances erected.

8. Evangelical *works* the weights in the one *end*, *men* in the other.—The *fate*, *salvation* or *damnation*.

No need of weighing the herd of sinners in general; their state is evident without.—But let us see,

1. The Socinians.

2. The Pharisees.

3. Antinomians.

4. Apostates.

5. Hypocrites.

6. Saints.

Application.—Let us examine ourselves.

SERMON LXXIII.

GLORYING IN THE CROSS.

A MISSIONARY SERMON.

Galatians, vi., 14.—But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

UNDER the influence of strong emotions, Paul departs from the common modes of speech, as in the text.—Paul was the subject of powerful excitement—his mind strongly agitated—he had heard that the Galatians, among whom he had planted the cross, &c., to avoid persecution, were glorying in circumcision, &c. How did he feel! and how did he express it!—Disdaining everything as a substitute for the cross, he exclaims, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the

cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”—What?—ashamed to own that death by which we live? * * *

There was a period in Paul’s life when he thought otherwise. * * * But there was another period in his history never to be forgotten, when the law came home. * * * Now “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” From that period to his dissolution, all he did or said was in reference to the cross!—the ground of his confidence—the object of his triumph.—“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

I. Explain the terms.

II. Justify the resolution.

I. “*The cross of Christ.*” Not the literal cross, for it was the basest kind of suffering; as though he had said, “God forbid that I should glory, save in *a piece of timber.*”

Nor the martyr’s cross; though there was a striking instance of humility, meekness, patience; as though he had said, “God forbid that I should glory, save in those stones fatal to Satan,” or any other instrument, &c.

But the meritorious sacrificial cross! By the Father’s appointment redeemed man. (*Bunting on 12th Luke, 32d v.*) The cross was the consummation of the mysterious scene and transaction.—In connexion with this he means the whole doctrine of salvation through the merit of Jesus; this is synonymous with the cross. “*Glorying*” in the cross—not boasting only—no man would boast of anything he was not acquainted with.—Experimental—Paul found all else but loss. He saw everything in the doctrine to command his approbation.

Not merely his affectionate attachment to it—though how did his affections cling to it.

Not merely *acquaintance, approbation, affection*, but *tri-*

umph. His feelings struggled for expression—he never concealed his glory—among friends or foes—though insulted for it, no matter—“laugh at me, confine me, kill me, still I glory in *Christ crucified!*”

Only in the cross—what means he by this? All kinds of glorying unconnected with the cross are vain!—He could boast—Hebrew of the Hebrews—his countrymen gloried in these things, and he formerly.—(Enlarge on that passage in the Philippians.)

Some say he gloried in *nothing* but the cross—not true—but in nothing but what was connected with the cross.—See him with the thorn in the flesh—he gloried there, but it was because the *power of Christ* would be more illustrious—again, “*We glory* in tribulations,” but we refer them to the cross; they come on account of it.

Doubtless, also, he gloried in the *birth* of Christ, for angels did so—he gloried in the ministry of his Lord—in the miracles—in the example of his Master—in the resurrection of Jesus—in the ascension of Jesus—in the intercession of Jesus—but he knew that all these were in vain without the *sacrificial death!*

He gloried in the wisdom of Christ—the power—the throne—the crown—the sceptre—the kingdom of Christ; but all these are nothing to *guilty* man without the vicarious offering, for “*without shedding of blood* there is no remission.”

“How can these things be?” says one. “Glory in a spectacle of horror! a man crucified!—an event that discovered nothing but desertion, humiliation, and shame!”—But see Elijah, when his servant’s eyes were opened, &c.—so Paul’s eyes were opened; and if the Holy Ghost speak “Ephphata” to thy heart, thou shalt see that the cross of Christ is our crown, his death our life, his shame our glory. Then shalt thou say, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

II. Justify the resolution.

That it was *Paul’s* conduct and sentiment, ought to be enough for a common mind * * * his mighty mind—his learning.—(Littleton.) Come, ye infidels; ye who boast

your powers of intellect—but *you* are in good company if with the great apostle of the Gentiles.

In justifying Paul's resolution, so many reasons offer, we can scarce make a selection—there is *every* reason.

1. It is the grand consummation of all the preceding dispensations of God to man.—For four thousand years, *Grace, Providence, &c.*, all tended to this one object.—In reference to this, *promises made, predictions, sacrifices.* Jews kept distinct, for of them Christ came. Every part of their history had a special reference hereto: their deliverance from bondage—the rock in the desert—serpent of brass, and multitude of other circumstances, all pointed hereto; and every pious Jew waited for the consolation of Israel. Now it came, &c.

Now the Jewish altars need smoke no more. Thou rock in Horeb, we turn from thee—thou brazen serpent, we leave thee to look on Jesus, &c., &c. Ye twinkling stars of typical dispensations, hide your heads, for the sun has risen, though eclipsed in blood—but soon over.

2. It is the place and scene of a decisive victory over the Lord's enemies and ours—promise to Eve—the opposition on Satan's part was kept up till the seed came—then a fierce attack—Herod—the wilderness—the garden, what a struggle—the annals of war record nothing like this!—In this scene the *potsherd*s of the earth are not striving; nor is it for a few inches of ground, like human warfare. * * * The fate of all nations suspended on that hour—all hell's legions in motion.—See how Jesus approaches it! “Father, the *hour* is come!”—the *hour!* the moment towards which all time has been tending.—He enters singly, “for of the people none to help him”—nailed to the cross! The joy of hell on this! they are sure of victory!—But hush! Jesus is travailing in the greatness of his strength—on the cross his victory is the greatest—rocks—sun—angels suspend, and make a pause in heaven—hell trembles—“spoils principalities and powers—in *it*, the cross.” True, he died; but in dying he conquered!—We will then glory—shout, shout, shout!

3. As the procuring cause of every blessing to Adam's

race. Not enough to rescue us, but *purchase* good things for us also—(Clarke) Rom., viii., 32, all tinged with blood!

Were not his blood meritorious, these things might in Scripture have been attributed to the birth, example, &c., of Christ.—But no, all is attributed to his *blood*, and that *meritorious*—“Made nigh by *blood*”—“opened the holiest by *blood*.”—The agonizing conscience can only go to Calvary’s wounded tree, which bleeds the balm he wants—“redemption in his blood.”—Is he anxious to be now in the family?—“Peace by his blood”—“reconciled,” not by the example, but “by the *death* of his Son.” Are we unclean? Only one specific, “the fountain opened”—“*the blood* of Christ cleanseth from all sin.” Have we an enemy? The road to victory over death gained by the *blood* of the Lamb; for by his dying he conquered death. Is Paradise to be obtained? Only one way: they all cry there, “To him that washed and redeemed us by his own blood”—all, all given to the *precious blood*!!!

Shall we not, then, glory in it? What grace—glory—heaven: the grand charter of all is from this cross!—“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

4. The most powerful and effectual incentive to all kinds of moral excellence.—Many have said “this doctrine tends to licentiousness;” if so, Paul could never glory in it.

He was aware that such objections would be made. “Do we make void the law through faith?” “God forbid,” as in the text; “we establish the law:” this produces genuine morality. “Shall we continue in sin?” “*God forbid.*” We are dead to sin by the cross of Christ!

On the cross, the moral law stands out in greater characters.—See moral grandeur there!—Hatred of sin? What could God give in proof of this equal to Jesus? Can you, then, love sin? * * * What are you thinking of? What moral excellence?—Patience, fortitude, &c.—are you thinking of this?—What moral virtue is before you? Is it forgiveness? See the cross—he prays!—Is it charity? See the cross—dying for a world!

5. The cross of Christ furnishes the *power* to (transenter)

all this morality in your hearts. Talk of morals? *Talk, talk, talk* to us of repentance—everlasting reason * * * The grand morality is love of him! Implant *this* in a penitent's heart.—“The dying love of Christ constrains us, &c.” * * * By its power crucified to the world. (Compare the cross of Christ with the Upas-tree.) If plants of bitterness be yet in us, it is not the fault of the cross; but we do not live under its shade, or they would wither, while all the fruits of Paradise, of righteousness which are by Christ, &c.—And is it so? Then “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Many other reasons—let these suffice.—

What place does the cross of Christ hold with you? Have you erased the cross of Christ from your creed?

If it is there, what place does it hold in your *affections*? Is this cross the ground of your confidence &c.?—Some of you glory in wealth—learning, &c. I hope none of you are glorying in sin—glorying in your shame? I charge you—the blood of Christ be on thee!—the *wrath* of the *Lamb!* * * * Great day of his wrath! “If in his *love* so terrible” * * * Are you glorying in pious parents—baptism, &c.?—Alas!—But ah! poor penitent! I look to thee! The command has come home! Thou hast been pointed to Jesus! thou hast believed—thou art washed, &c.! In what dost *thou* glory? “I nothing have, I nothing am”—“I glory in him who loved me better than his own life!”—Go on—confess him and his cross—be not ashamed.

“Christian ministers,” do we make Christ crucified the topic of our sermons?—You will then know whether we preach like apostles.—“We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.” Can we glory in our talents and keep Christ out of sight? Shall we glory in the harmony of periods, and keep Christ out of mind? But can we glory in the life, the example of Christ, and keep his death out of sight? “I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified!” Again, going to Rome—ah! he will talk then about the Supreme Being, &c. “I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome

also.”—Now he hears the Galatians are about to conceal the cross.—What ! blot the sun out of the system ! all doctrines revolve round this, and receive their light and effect from it !

This doctrine has had many triumphs—it still triumphs !—it has conducted millions to glory !—it is the doctrine that *shall* prevail. This is the doctrine our missionaries are making known—if you approve it, give !

Moravian missionary preaching the Lord.—“ Say it again,” said the Indian : yes, they will never tire saying it again. * * * * *

If anything this morning can bring a good collection, it will be the cross of Christ. * * * * *

SERMON LXXIV.

CONFESSION OF SIN.

1 John, i., 9.—If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

SIN is defined, “ the transgression of the law ”—all non-conformity to God’s law, whether of commission or omission, *is sin*.—John’s definition—three things in the idea of sin—lawgiver—law given—law broken.

1. Lawgiver is God !—our Maker ! has a right to be our governor, and, as such, he is authorized to make laws for our conduct—often ready to maintain *man’s* rights—forget not *God’s* rights—this is one, his right to govern—he gave life, and should give law.

2. Law given.—God has exercised his right as our Maker and Governor by various degrees and in various ways ; not to speak of internal conscience, the light of every man, he has made known to us a clearer law—moral—written—besides the ceremonial, two tables of stone, ten precepts, the summary of the moral law. *Moral*, to distinguish from the *ceremonial* ; *this* binding only on the Jews, and transient, binding on them only in their dispensation : *that* binding on *all*, and *perpetual, immutable* ! It has been confirmed by the Gospel ; Jesus Christ submitted to it—made under it—

practised it—as an example—enforced it—gave a summary more brief than it—more valuable, too, as it brings forth the leading principle of it—*love!*

3. Law broken.—Sin is its violation—texts says, “*confess this;*” a duty often enjoined in Holy Scripture. So Solomon says. * * * Jesus Christ, in the parable of the prodigal, makes it a leading feature: “*I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son*”—danger of the nature of true confession.

I. The nature of the duty.

II. The promise annexed to its performance.

III. The security afforded for its fulfilment.

1. The nature of the duty.

1. It must be *sincere* and *cordial*—not lips, but *heart!*—result of conviction. He who truly confesses is impressed with the majesty of the lawgiver; a *formalist* may confess, but he only feels sin as an offence against *society*, or his own *character*: but the true penitent is so convinced that sin is against God, that he cries, “against *thee* only:” he feels that he has been in rebellion, high-treason against the King of Kings. The formalist confesses, but says much to excuse—that God acts too hard: the true penitent is convinced of the equity of the lawgiver—every precept—all right and good—no fault but in him.—The formalist confesses, but exclaims against the *penalty* the law demands: not so the penitent; he feels no such thing as a *little* sin—he feels that he is doomed to *eternal death*, and thus feeling, cries, “It is just, the sentence should take place.”

2. *Abandon sin for the future.*—Pharaoh confessed, but he was under the influence of carnal terror—no sooner was the rod removed than he returned to his old sins—abandon them—cut off the right hand, &c.

3. Confession must be *personal* and *individual*.—Nothing more worthless than the vague confession with which the world abounds: “God help *us*, we are *all* sinners;” this is rather to confess *others’* sins, or classed in *general* mass. But those recorded in Scripture are personal—David—Publi-

can—*me* a sinner—not *us* sinful sons of Adam ; not *us* sinful inhabitants of Judea ; nor *us* publicans—but he loses sight of all others—*me*.

4. Must be *general* and *comprehensive*—not one *particular* sin, perhaps *recently* committed, or which happens to expose us to human censure, &c. But *all*, of every kind—and take pains to recollect—by closet work—by comparing with God’s word. * * * Not only of our outward conduct, but our tempers and dispositions—an idle thought is wicked—not only confess the sin of our *life*, but of our *nature*. Formalists are deficient here—they say their hearts were good—not so the penitent ; his heart a thousand times worse—he finds that not only was the *stream* tainted, but the *fountain*.

5. *Frank, honest, and ingenuous*—no excuse—no whiting—all such is evil—confess in all aggravations—the true penitent cannot discover the most favourable circumstance, though others may see some such in it. See the prodigal—against *thee*—*in thy sight*—these are what make sin exceeding sinful.—

6. *Must be connected with a believing application to God for mercy through a Mediator*.—Judas no better for his confession—no penitence in that—his was despair—the sorrow of the world worketh death—but godly sorrow not—when it degenerates to despair, it ceases to be repentance.—The scapegoat taught the necessity of this looking for mercy by faith—confessed their sins on the goat—a typical transfer on it. So, on Jesus—the hand of faith laying hold on him. * * * * *

II. *The promise annexed to its performance.*

1. “We receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus.” If with true penitence and faith we confess, God will forgive.—This does not imply an alteration in the proper desert of sin—it is always hateful—not less so when it is pardoned—entertain the same feelings we had when seeking pardon—this makes us loath ourselves. But forgiveness implies the remission of the penalty.—God does not impute sin when the sinner is pardoned.—*Blessings* are connected with it also.

1. *Peace* with God. 2. A persuasion of our *adoption—pardon* is the act of God as a Sovereign—*adoption* as a gracious Father; yet they always *go together*. 3. It is connected further with a title to *eternal happiness*—“*heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ!*”

2. This is the first part of the promise—*forgiveness—the guilt*. The other part is *purification* from all unrighteousness.—In sin two things are to be considered—the *sinful act*, and the *sinning principle* which led to it.—It taints the whole *man!*—*corrupts*, so as to offend *God!*—God then promises the Holy Ghost to believers—not as a *Comforter* only, but a *Sanctifier*. This work is begun at, and from, the time of justification. This blessing is *initio*, imparted *at that moment*.—Christ sets up his throne, rules, and begins to make all things new. Every pardoned man is, in a measure, sanctified: he hates sin, and if “he follow on to know the Lord,” *all* darkness will be removed.—(See Howe, p. 11.)

III. *The security afforded for its fulfilment.*

The faithfulness and justice of God.

1. *Faithfulness* is accuracy in fulfilling an engagement. God has *bound* himself hereto!—“I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins, and their iniquities will I remember no more.”—“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”—“I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”—“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Promises of *purity* also: “I will pour clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.”—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”—This is a *promise* as well as a *precept*.—Now He cannot *lie*, nor *repent*.—What inducement in God to violate them? Men often make *rash* promises, and as often break them.—God

makes no thoughtless ones; all settled in merey and grace. Men do them *faithlessly*—God is *truth* itself.—Men often cannot perform through *unforeseen* events. Not so God. It is his *changeless* purpose to forgive all who come in his way.

2. *Justice* also.—We do not explain this in reference to his promises to us, but his engagements with the Messiah.—Certain transactions are recorded, when sacrifices could not put away sin, “but a Divine appointment was necessary.” Christ said, “*Lo! I come.*”—He undertook to be man’s substitute as a sufficient atonement—our kinsman—what he undertook he performed. “In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”—But on what condition?—this, “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed: he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand: he shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.” Now after the Son had performed, died, risen—if the Father refused to pardon and sanctify, to save *one* who came in His way, he would be unjust to his Christ.—So infinitely sure are we of salvation if we will be saved in God’s way. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Faithful and just? These were the attributes from which we had originally nothing to hope. If he said, “*Faithful to punish,*” all could believe; if “*merciful and gracious to forgive,*” no difficulty. But an act of *justice!* How? *Christ’s atonement* solves all! it is the key! We defy any who reject the atonement to make any sense of this text. How can such go to the *justice* of God, and demand forgiveness? “God is a consuming fire.”

But if we look at the atonement all is clear. Christ suffered: he was God’s own Son!—Therefore there is an infinite merit in his sufferings and death.—Hence, God can be *just*, and yet a Saviour! * * * Do not be satisfied with admiring this plan, but make a *practical* application. Let us be willing to look at our sins—drink in our shame—humble ourselves—come to the throne of grace, and on

Christ's grounds expect, and humbly claim that God would forgive them all! Then look for the Holy Ghost, the *Comforter* and *Sanctifier*, and at last he will crown us with glory in the life of the world to come.

SERMON LXXV.

TALENTS MISIMPROVED RESUMED BY THE OWNER.

Matthew, xxv., 29.—For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.

Two principles run through revelation.

1. All good is from God.
2. All damnation is from men.—Fletcher.

Though the text leads to the first, yet it leads chiefly to the latter: the words occur in connexion with the parable of the talents, and that of the sower no less than *five* times, and always in this connexion. The meaning is, that he who improves what he has shall receive more, either in *kind* or *value*, here and hereafter—and vice versa.

Apply the text,

- I. To Providential favours.
- II. To useful gifts.
- III. To religious privileges.
- IV. To vital piety.
- V. To missionary zeal.

I. Providential favours.

All good is from God—this is a state of trial, and God will judge us for his gifts. Among his *Providential favours*, *wealth* is one; yet who will own himself rich? Many are willing to quit the title when they find that the statutes of heaven have laid such a tax of charity on them.—They *evade* the tax. Ask the man with one hundred pounds, and he points to one with a thousand; ask him, and he yet points to others. Wesley defined a rich man to be, “one who had

enough for present wants, and a little over.”—*He* is not rich who appears great, and this on another’s property, and fails * * * We may not expend or give away another’s property.—“Owe no man anything.”—But a man who has anything over his *wants*, must not say, “’*Tis mine:*” but the Lord’s steward—he may not consult *any* how to lay it out, but the *Bible*.—There he finds it is not to be *hoarded*, nor *squandered*, nor in *finery*, nor to make *children proud*—but God intends him for his steward to the poor, and to cast into the Lord’s treasury, according, not to what others do, but to what *he hath*.

Now, if employed thus, the text says, he shall have more. How often is this paid in *kind*: while the niggard loses his gripe, your stores increase.—But if God do not increase *wealth*, he receives in *value*, if not in *kind*. What heartfelt satisfaction when feeding the poor and the widow, &c. But there is another world: “And God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have showed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister:” their works follow after.—“But he who has not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.” The miser’s wealth often flies away—but if not, the more he has, the more avaricious: he has no enjoyment—a covetous man cannot. What! seeing his brother and the cause of God have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? What! has he religion? He may have a *name*, and a high office, but God sees him as an idolator, and no such “hath eternal life abiding in him.” Take care, and send your money to heaven.—“Where is the messenger?” “Give to the poor, and *treasure in heaven*”—give it to charity and piety.—“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

Influence is another Providential favour; as a parent, master, &c.

II. *Useful gifts*.—

For the *souls* of men—clear understanding, correct judgment, good memory, engaging address.—He begins to open

his mouth, say in a class; it is with fear and trembling: by-and-by his usefulness is increased.—See him improving *according to the Giver's design*; and what is this? Is it applause? Is it for a livelihood?—No; infinitely higher, that he might not aim at *display*, but pleasing the Giver, and for the good of the creature—points them to *him*.

In this character does not God increase them?—Understanding more clear, judgment more correct, readier tongue, &c.; and in this is he not happy *here*?—But see the reward in the skies: many are “his joy and his crown!”

But he who has not, &c.—does not stir up the gift of God, &c.—lives on his stores, &c.—where are his gifts and usefulness? But suppose worse. One whispers in his ear, “*He is a prodigy*;” he drinks it in, and his aim then is to show *himself*, &c.—“From him will be taken away even that he hath.” It has often happened—then he has no pleasure *here*, nor prospect *hereafter*—but fire!—“Rejoice not that the devils are subject to you:” more important to be approved of God!

III. *Religious privileges.*

In having the Gospel record and a living ministry.—See our forefathers.—To the Gospel, then, we owe even our *civilization*. But see man as immortal! Darting through the air!—The Gospel brings glad tidings! And oh! the public ministry!—“Now, every one that hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly.” And what is the *Giver's design* in this? Is it to come to church, listen, and pass your opinion? It is that you *obey* the word.—If you show every other sign, however hopeful, all nothing unless you keep the word in *practice*. “Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.”—“Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hands to his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”—Such a man, thus improving, is no wayside hearer—nor a stony ground—soon pleased and soon offended

—nor a thorny, who bids fair for a season—but he brings forth fruit—God gives them fair more abundantly—their knowledge of the Bible increases astonishingly; and, knowing the first principles, they can go on with the preacher: not only their *knowledge*, but their *love, joy, zeal, &c.*

Others do not improve.—Awful that *three fourths* of the seed in the parable was lost.—Turn over your own conscience: have you “obeyed from the heart?” Not, “do you praise it?” Is it your rule *daily*? Such who do not, shall lose all the benefit intended, and, perhaps, through their neglect, the village or town may lose the Gospel—others following them. See in the Acts: it is said of many places, they preached the Gospel there—what a tombstone!—the sepulchre of the Gospel! But is it preached there now? Alas! the candlestick is removed.

IV. *Vital piety* :

More than profession of attachment to Jesus and his cause, however respectable, regular, and long continued.—It may be as decent as that of the five virgins.—It must be *vital*—a flame kindled in the heart from God’s own altar while man is faithful.—Now what is *God’s design here*? To exercise it and grow in it; and by living by the vital faith he experiences, his faith increases to a *father’s*: he holds fast *now*; in Christ he has *life*! “To him shall be given!”

“But whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.” How many lose *vital piety*: they think, “Now my mountain is strong; I need not pray so much, nor be so strict in denying and watching. Die? No, not surely die;” and as the soul drinks in this, he is less diligent in the closet, less watchful, conscientious, not so single an eye: he loses, and perhaps rapidly; and is either church lumber, or measures back to earth!

V. *Missionary zeal.*

There is always this in true piety—not there *should* be, but there *is*.—(Gaultier.) He will reprove and pray for a neighbour—a relation, &c. What! indifferent to a *father’s* salvation, or *brother’s*, or *wife’s*, or *child’s*? What! no tears, no prayers? But he hears that there are millions of

souls beyond his country! "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" Wilt thou not employ me as a "hewer of wood and drawer of water?" This spirit he will possess as his piety abounds.—God feeds the flame while he is thus concerned, the oil is poured in, and the zeal of God's house eats him up—his property—his life!—But he shall receive all again, and a reward too, though not of *right*, yet of *grace*.

But let a man begin to lose piety, and this zeal evaporates; and from him, his soul, God will take away, &c., *here* and *hereafter*.

* * * In a short time we are going to the eternal world! Our days flee!—After death is *judgment*.—Then the sentence, "Come," or "Depart:" which are you prepared for? You have had many gifts: have you improved them?—Search yourselves: are you treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath? Have you obeyed the Gospel, that says, "Come out from among them?" "What!" say you, "behave rudely to my friends? They are honest, and respectable, and amusing; and must I leave them because they do not fear God?"—You must separate from all ungodly company; I mean, you must not spend your hours of pleasure among them. * * * "Touch not, taste not, handle not." Not only separate from the *sinner*, but the *sin*. The Gospel says also, "*repent*." Have you? It says, "*Come to me*." Have you?—Some of you are laden with cares and misery enough. Come—he will receive you *graciously*: not only *permit* you to come, but *thank* you for coming—*with a grace*.

Those of you who were once converted, do you not want it again? Is it not your cry, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified:" and add also, "Help us to be *faithful*." It is a sad thing to desire pardon to escape hell, and not desire faith and holiness to live to God!—Are we too warm in these things? What is everything in life compared with the eternal world! Be not deceived; God is not mocked; "for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;" and "Be not weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

SERMON LXXVI.

GREAT RESULTS FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS.

Zechariah, iv., 10.—Who hath despised the day of small things!

Desponding paralyzes—hope animates—every great undertaking requires more than lukewarmness—despondency is greatest at the *commencement*. So with the Jews on their return from Babylon, when they commenced rebuilding the Temple.—(Expatriate.) They wept at the comparison of the two; but their tears were as *dew*!—The Samaritans derided them, and the Jews who were left in Chaldea would not return and assist.—Then the prophet commanded them to dissipate their fears: “Who hath despised the day of small things?”

This has ever since been a watchword among Christians: small beginnings are not to be despised; we shall apply it,

- I. To the institutions for religion.
- II. To personal and private religion.

I. To the institutions for religion.

This age is famous for struggles for Christ—ingenuity added to mercy to invent means—the Gospel to the heathen—Sabbath-schools—and *here* erected a house for God. In many cases appearances may be discouraging; many may draw back, and even some friends; but the text rouses them—they rally and take courage.

Four reasons why we should not despise the day of small things.

1. Because often the mightiest effects are produced from them.—The world of *nature*: The oak under which cattle ruminates, was an acorn which a child or a sparrow could grasp—the river, once a rivulet which the ox might drink up. World of *literature*: Johnson once learning his alphabet—Newton arithmetic—Milton poetry on his mother’s

knee. *Political* world: many nations arise from the will of one man—the midday vision of a midnight dream.—So in *grace*; you know what it is, and what it will be — and what is its origin? See what the Jews expected—seven thunders would sound—lightnings dart—mountains rise up to receive the Messiah's feet.—But a Jewish couple traveling—put up at a stable—at midnight her pangs came on—laid the babe in a manger—yet this religion is to vanquish every other.

Trace the cause of Protestantism—see it all over Europe, all once bowed to the beast—now* *fifty millions* free who three centuries ago walked in slavery.—See its rise—not by kings, but by a Dominican friar—nor did Luther know where it would end. See Methodism—half a million members—one thousand preachers, some of scholastic eloquence. Trace it seventy years—then *two* preachers, and *thirty* or *forty* members, &c.

See the London Missionary Society, expending thirty thousand pounds a year—one hundred missionaries—abolished idolatry in the South Seas—twenty-six years ago confined to the consultations of nine ministers in London.

See the Baptist missionaries—rendered the gift of tongues useless—from the Ganges to the Indus—twenty-eight years ago confined to a few ministers who met at Kettering.

See the Bible Society, the noblest luminary—that great light to rule the day, surrounded by thousands of satellites. Its praises in all worlds—seventeen years ago it was the purpose of the Tract Society, by one who wished, to provide Bibles for the Welsh. Look at these monuments, and take courage.

2. Because God's power can make the feeblest mighty for the accomplishment of his work.—*Omnipotence!*—the terror of the wicked, &c.—can do all things—difficulty is a word without meaning.—“He spake, and it was done:” he said, “Let there be light”—can work against means.—But see—rod of Moses—ram's horns—few fishermen to convert the world—the inference is, “Power belongs to God.”

3. We never know what God intends to do, by our understanding.—Prescience is not ours—we should not be

* Year 1819.

happy if we had it.—Not having this, we cannot see what God will do. Robert Raikes of Gloucester, and a few ragged children—he little knew the scheme he sketched—nor Wesley, when putting thirty or forty in classes, a scheme known in all lands.—When a minister has converted a soul, it is not a single *act*—spread it—a seed growing from it, is seen at the archangel's trump. The Christian is rewarded according to the *fruit* of his doings.—The man who brought the first grain of wheat here—so God rewards for the *fruit*.

4. In matters of religion, what is *comparatively* little is *abstractedly* great—men look for numbers—who would build an hospital for *one*? If this were done, all men would say your labour is *lost*; and, indeed, it would be so; there must be an aggregate to make an object to justify these acts. Not so in religion: the soul, in point of immortality, derives such incalculable worth, that it would repay all our labours from its own *species*, not *numbers*.—"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" What funeral obsequies for a lost soul? The sun to veil—the heavens in sackcloth—all nature vocal could not give a shriek too deep! No; nor is any labour, then, too much to save *one*.—How is it that we are so little affected when only *one* child in a Sabbath-school is converted—or only *one* hearer of the word; and yet we despond—or if we hear of fifty negroes saved by the Lord?—It is small, viewed *relatively*; but see it *abstractedly*!—Why, then, do we think so little of one? Because so many in the gall of bitterness—hundreds of millions—and the excess so great that the mind is blunted when hundreds die the second death—as in a churchyard, death's horrible numbers slain takes away his hideous likeness, and hence we neglect *one* dying person.—(*Abel.*)

If, then, we want to do much for God, do not *generalize* so much: conceive, if only *one soul* had fallen, all angels would have thought it worth while to accomplish, &c.—Look thus: do not be discouraged by seeing how many are *unsaved*, but look at the *one saved*.—*Ministers, be strong!*

Do not despise it by *inattention*. Do not discard a scheme at once, but examine a new scheme, &c.—nor despise it by

ridicule—nor *neglect*.—(Styles.)—If this rule were tried, many noble schemes would never have brought their glory forth.—Take care of the infant—man can take care of himself.

II. *To personal and private religion.*

Religion is often small in its commencement—sometimes rapid, sudden conviction—but ordinarily more slow—figures in Scripture—grain of mustard-seed—leaven—“first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.”—A pious resolution in the mind of a child or Sabbath-school youth—the hint of a friend, as when the sailor wished the rope in hell—or seriousness under a sermon when brought by curiosity—a pointed remark; like the thistle down, it radiates where it drops: he goes home, is uneasy; not deep enough to leave off sin, but not happy; angry with all: the word is fascinating, and he goes again, &c.—begins to amend—now pleased with himself—roused again—is told that no works of righteousness can save—he is half inclined to go back to the world; but he comes again, and hears “the Lord our Righteousness”—he believes—he enters into rest; but for a while he is low, &c.—it is the day of small things.

It may be despised by *scorn*—“He will be cured of the fever.”—Despised by *opposition*: where smiles succeed not, force is used.—Are any here?—Stop the wind—put out the sun—try and pull up the oak, the veteran of centuries—equally easy.—May be despised by *neglect*—inattention—religious impressions are not fostered enough.—How many cautious, timid, yet anxious steps; yet no congratulation—no assistance.—What! say, “If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.”—Why, then, take away preaching.—Philippian jailer.—First impressions are sacred: if you can find no better help for them, offer your own—adopt them; let them be your protégée. If they wander, follow them; if they do not improve, try on—if man would not sail the world to save a soul, he never felt its worth.
* * * Some reasons why not despicable, &c.

It is not despised by those who best know its value.

1. The *Father of Mercies*.—See the prodigal—the parent rises to seek him—he ran, and he was the only one that ran—did he wait then to put him on his *probation*?—No: the

first return of a prodigal more musical than angel's notes. He would hush every harp if not able to hear both.

2. Did *the Son* despise the day of small things? See him among his weak disciples—see him in the Pharisee's house—how did he serve the woman?—Dying thief—his *first* prayer was heard!—

3. Do *angels* despise the day of small things? Do they wait to see the redeemed advance through the gates? It is at his repentance that all heaven resounds.

4. Does *Satan* despise the day of small things? The first tears of penitence excite his power to arrest it, &c.

Because it is the pledge of greater.—Traveller and the Sun—Farmer and April—Mother and Babe.—*We* should not, then, despise the day of small things. The apostles were once in the infancy of grace; and when God converts, no man knows how holy he may be, &c.—This grace is to operate forever!

Application.

1. To *ministers*.—To us is committed the care of souls. We labour for immortality.—Our success, if so, is greater than crowds and plaudits—it will appear in glory.—*The conversion of the soul* is *our* business. I do not mean first impressions: many think all is done here.—It is too often the *preacher*, and not the pastoral duties that are attended to.—We shoot the arrow, but do not follow the deer.—We grasp at handfuls of success, but do not *gather* the handfuls.—Wesley followed up the blow!—If the iron cool, it is harder: if fruit, the *bud* must not be neglected:—a preacher's eye is to be active as his heart; and when the sermon is over, he is to follow and retouch the impression.

2. *Parents*, next to ministers, souls as well as bodies are committed to you—explain, enforce, exemplify, pray, and look up for the *success*.—Encourage your children to be familiar with you; do not discourage; do not say, “It is but the morning cloud and early dew.”—*Eagle—Lark*.

3. *Sabbath-school teachers*—the salvation of the soul is your object.—Is there in your circle one anxious countenance, where solicitude struggles, but cannot give feeling in language, but in looks asks, “What shall I do to be saved?”

Will you say, "Oh! these impressions have been lost before." Why? Because despised by you.—I charge you, as you must answer it, mind the buds and the blossoms.

All of you may do something in this way. Have you not seen the gay in the house of God drop the head? &c.—Go home, and carry them the balm—you need no apology: they will meet you with, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

4. *The lately awakened.*—Despise not in yourselves the day of small things—dread nothing so much as the loss of *first impressions*—it is the dawn.—"Seek him, call on him while he is nigh." It is a crisis when a man is moved under a sermon. The axis quivers, and saints and angels hover to see the balance!—Next to hell, dread to lose it—read, pray: let not the sapling compare with the oak, and be discouraged.—I wish to break despair and lift from despondency.—He who thinks he has religion enough cannot give a more decisive proof that he has none!

* * * No schism caused these walls to rise.—If this church had no merit but that it unites all sects, it is worthy.—Satan had no hand here.—I would not toss the censer of adulation to any man living, yet I must express my feelings towards those who built this house from that charity which is stronger than faith and hope.—I look around me, and see that the day of small things is not to be despised.—Now fulfil my joy!—Two thousand pounds debt—*well* expended. Where are they? In your pockets.—We hope they will not be always there.—It is a year old; but it may die!

We help to build the churches, and we ask a return—it is the same object.—Our great object is to make men Christians; then they may leave us.—Ours is a catholic Church.—Heavy debts are not pleasant for infant churches—"but the times are bad."—They may be worse; then you would be sorry that you did not give: they may be better; then you would not regret it.

I trust that Britain's sun will yet shine forth, and then you will be paid—you will not regret.

SERMON LXXVII.

THE NEED OF PATIENCE.

Hebrews, x., 36.—For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

It requires but little knowledge of the history of the primitive Church to know that they were persecuted grievously, and yet in the face of their ministers their conduct under it was the best comment on the religion of Jesus. It is easy to see the danger to which this exposed them; many did, as one might expect—they apostatized; and hence the reason why the epistles abound so much with exhortation in reference to bearing under sufferings.

It has been said that nine tenths of the Christian graces are *passive* ones, and refer to what we should *suffer* rather than *do*: it was comparatively easy to *do*; but they are not to suppose that all is then over; it is needful to have patience even after they *have done* the will of God—a patience in suffering, as well as a willingness in doing the will of God, &c.—lying like an anvil to the stroke. Now the primitive Christians were under far different circumstances to us: it would be ingratitude to say they suffered no more than we; but yet that we have equal need of the exhortation, I hope to show in a few points. What is *patience*? I do not call that patience which is a stupid insensibility; the man who *feels not* is not a patient man; but I mean one who feels, and feels acutely, in proportion as the edge has been sharpened by religion; yet, though he *feel*, he *bears* it! *Patience* is a submission to the will of God and all his dispensations without a murmur, or even fretfulness—perfect resignation. *Resignation* refers to submitting to whatever *God* appoints; but *patience* to what comes from *man*; yet that this latter is sometimes used in reference to *God* is clear from Job's case; his patience is spoken of in reference to *God*, and in *this* we are desired to be mindful of it.

I. Now we have need of patience: first, with regard to

the dispensations of God ; his providence is his act. Put a case : a pious, honest family who wish to owe no man anything but *love* !—the provider, a son perhaps, on whom the aged pair depended, is laid on a bed of affliction, and, instead of being able to minister, is now ministered unto. Say you that this is not a case that needs patience ? That evidently comes from *God* ! Let none deride the feelings of this state, and make light of the affliction and deny it the name. * * * Other cases might be added.

2. Let none start if I say we have need of patience *towards ourselves*. Suppose a man has experienced a good degree of the measure of God, and thinks himself strong enough to combat temptation : it meets him ; he finds it is more than a match ; perhaps *anger* arises ; he thinks he can never be saved from all evil tempers ; he has need of patience, &c. Let him, therefore, strive, and cease not till everything, and every *thought*, is brought into *subjection*.

3. And if needful for ourselves, much more towards others. Who is the man whose lot is cast in those favourable circumstances, as to exclude from all possible liabilities to procrastination, &c. None ! Man possesses different casts of mind ; these produce different opinions ; these different practices ; for the man who acts not from opinion is the mere child of whim : we require patience for mutual forbearance in these respects ; and some are naturally of unhappy dispositions. But there are some, and they take a *delight* in provoking you, so full of Satan as to delight in falsely accusing you, cast out your names as evil, and plague you from the mere spirit of malevolence. Others, and they injure a noble mind as much by excess of servility : this the Christian cannot bear ; he has need of patience, &c., on all these and other accounts.

II. How shall we obtain this ?

1. *Humility* is the first step, or, rather, the *parent* of it ; patience is its legitimate offspring ! The humble man sees he is the least of all God's mercies ; no patience where this is not : the proud man is an impatient man ; he resents everything—not that a good man should not resent, in a certain sense, and inform the person that he has injured him. But

the proud man looks for *more* than he has a right to, and the humble man for *less* than he could claim!—George III. could bear the hootings of a mob.—St. Paul at Miletus. * * *

2. It will be farther produced by a view of his obligation to God. He sees he deserved nothing but eternal death!—he weighs his deservings by his present privileges—a child of wrath—a child of God! &c., &c., &c.—and his heart is lost in this contemplation, and is ever crying, “What shall I *render* unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?”

3. Inspired by remembering that whatever we have is of God! not the produce of our labour or industry, but his gift! The soul that thinks and believes this, will submit with patience. Job’s patience sprang from this: “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” He gave you children—he had a right to take them from you; and no man can say, *What doest thou?* The earth is the Lord’s! his by right; and if he choose to call in any of that he lent thee, be patient!

4. A firm persuasion that all he does is for good; nay, for the best! I know no principle more rooted in my mind than this, that he who is essentially good can do nothing to injure thee: whatever is, is best! True, he hides from thee his reasons; he makes darkness his covering; but remember, God is love! Say he knows best, and in *that day* thou wilt see it; then wilt thou bless him that thy heart has bled!

5. Keep the eye fixed on Jesus! as he was, so be you in this world! Remember, he is your copy: he was reviled, but reviled not again; he bore the “contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.” “Let the same mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.” Though he could have called legions of angels, yet he submits to ungodly men, and his dying lips quiver, *Father, forgive!* * * * * *

6. Preserve your union with God by Christ, and with Christ by faith: remember, you are the branch in the vine. Quote John, xv.—The branch must depend on the stem for the juice and moisture necessary to vegetable life. You are called to the same union—joined to the Lord: of one spirit with him, you will receive those supplies of grace which the

fifth head requires; your experience will be in spirit, and not in letter. Abide in Christ, for without him ye can do nothing.

Objection.—But all my trials cannot come from God. I am ill-used, &c., &c., by ungodly men, and that is injustice, &c., and God forbids it; when he *forbids*, therefore, he cannot *will*. True, the reasoning is good; he *wills* not this; but he foresees that it will come, and he permits it; that is, it could not be otherwise unless he worked a miracle to prevent it; but this he will not do. But he overrules the evil, and blessings come out of it—brings good of it to his children; and it is his will that by all these trials we should improve. Extract the good out of the evil, and be joyful even in tribulation, knowing, as Paul says, it worketh patience. The fruit is (Moore), having “suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”

Finally, you shall inherit the promises. * * *

SERMON LXXVIII.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF A STABLE MIND.

Isaiah, xxvi., 3.—Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.

THIS passage and its connexion describes the state of the believer or Church in the times of the Messiah. It is applicable to us; for in our dispensation “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” I have chosen the text rather as a motto for our subject, which is to treat of a stable mind: we shall there show,

- I. What it is to possess it.
- II. Its blessedness.
- III. The way how to attain it

I. The first mark of an unsettled mind is *doubtfulness*: you hear a Christian or a church singing,

“Not a cloud doth arise to darken the skies,
Or hide for a moment my Lord from my eyes.”

And you often say, Oh! when will this be my state? when shall I walk under the light of thy countenance? This doubting unsettles the mind. Now there may be two causes of this: 1. Living in some lust, harbouring something within: the light of God can never shine on you in this state; your eye is not single, therefore your body cannot be full of light. If you would have a peaceful conscience, you must have a *pure* one, for in this alone can the *peace of faith* be enjoyed. But perhaps this is not your case: you say,

“Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with thee this heart to share,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And reign without a rival there.”

The cause may be, 2. You have not renounced *self*; you have some kind of dependance on your renunciation of sin for acceptance with God: this will not do. Even after you have come to the temple and stood afar off, and not dared to lift up your eyes and smite upon your breast, you must still cry, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” The cure of this is, coming out of self, and casting the whole soul naked before the cross, and relying on Christ alone for everlasting life. It is more difficult to renounce *self* than *sin*; and it is this which keeps thousands back.

“I nothing have, I nothing am,
I nothing want beside.”

Now the cure of this *doubtfulness* is an unshaken dependance on God, a firm trust in him that it shall be even *unto me* according to his word—the word of the Lord! There must be a steady act of faith, a taking and keeping hold of God in Christ, and a saying with Fletcher, “*I must, I will believe.*” Faith is a divine recumbency on the blood of Christ; and this settles the mind and preserves the soul in peace.

II. Another mark and cause of an unsettled mind is an *inordinate love of the world*. Who is there among us that does not find the world stealing in upon us; yea, even at our devotions! Now the cure of this is supreme love to

Christ. There are two hinderances to a steady mind : 1. The loving of unlawful things ; and, 2. The loving of lawful things with inordinate affection. I need spend no time on the *first* ; it is evidently criminal ; but the second will unsettle thy mind. Now the cure of this is, let Christ be the centre of thy soul : if he be supreme in thy affections, thy mind will be at rest. Dr. Coke's illustration shows how easy it is to turn the mind to what it most loves. I am in company with my sweetest friendship ; for a time, however, I appear to be immersed in business ; my hands are employed in other concerns ; yet how delightfully and rapidly I can return to my friendship, who is on my right and left, &c. Now if Christ be supreme, thou canst easily turn to him ; he ever surrounds thee ! Oh ! man, take him to thy business with thee to-morrow. Oh ! woman, let him be at thy domestic circle to-morrow ! &c.

III. An unsettled mind is uneasy under afflictions.—You say I need not caution you against the love of the world, for it has little left which you enjoy ; your heart lies bleeding ! Oh ! thou widow, weak as the ivy torn from the oak ! Oh ! thou man, from whose eyes thy desire was cut off at a stroke, &c., what will settle thy mind ? Thou art racked with torture ! The cure for this is a consideration of the perfections of thy God. I say rather *perfections* than *Providence*, for the volume of Providence, in this instance, is a sealed book ; but in a view of God's perfections thy mind will be at rest. The perfections I allude to are the *eye* and the *heart* of God. *His eye* : nothing happens to thee but he sees it ! The sorrows of thy heart are not unseen by him ! Thy human friendships never saw the unutterable sorrows of thy heart ! but he does ! And, let me add, they never *felt* them ; but thy God feels them : in the midnight hour he has responded to thy sigh, he has dropped his tear with thine ! Thy friend was never in thy circumstances *identically* : but see, “ we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Perhaps thou art saying, "Even my friends have forsaken me; none calls on me to commiserate." Has thy God forsaken thee? does he never call on thee? Yes; his broad eye, that takes in creation at a glance, sees all thy griefs: and is he indifferent to them? Nay, he *feels* them too: he would not suffer them if thy good would allow their discontinuance: while he afflicts, he weeps. The cure in this case, therefore, is submission to the Divine will! Perfect resignation to him who does all things well! "Who is among you that walketh in darkness and hath no light?"—Stay upon God!

II. See the strength of the expression, *perfect* peace. Margin reads, *peace, peace!* nothing but peace! St. Paul calls it "a peace which passeth all understanding," &c.; and no wonder, for it is the *peace of God*, and he passeth knowledge!

We have now spoken of faith, love, and resignation to the Divine will as the cures of an unsteady mind; but there is another character of this mind which I would name: *vain and wandering thoughts*. You say, "I cannot call them sinful, they do not tend that way; but they rove over creation, and fix on nothing; yet lead me off from God." Let me ask you a question. Do you dislike them very much? No; they are generally *entertained*, if not *invited*. I would here remark the character most inclined to them. It is the superficial Christian; it is one that seldom thinks deeply; dwells on the surface of things, and can scarcely defend the simplest Christian truth with any depth of understanding. The frothy chitchat of the day draws him aside. The tea-table talk of the female is beaux and bonnets, and of the men, politics and electioneering; but let Jesus be introduced, and the things of eternity, and a dulness is spread over the party; the chat of the day is preferred.

Now we want a cure for this. Do not entertain them; cut them off; "put the knife to thy throat:" this is the beginning of all religion. "If any be my disciple, he will deny himself," &c. Keep from the food on which they feed, and starve them out. Another way to cure this is, as the Rev. Mr. Newton says, "Fill the bushel with wheat, and

there will be no room for the chaff." Spiritualize this: fill the heart with Jesus and his salvation, and it will not wander. Again: read useful books. It is a shame that Christians can converse so short a time on religious subjects: let them meet a Deist or Antinomian, &c., and they are confounded; they cannot defend the truths they maintain. I am glad that our females are now seeing the value of reading: the idea that their minds are only fitted for novels is no more. I would as soon that death should scatter poison about a drawing-room, for every incautious hand, as have novels lying on the table: they are the poison of the mind.

Be much in closet prayer: these wanderers seldom pray. The oftener you come to the cross, the more sensibly you will experience the crucifying of all these wanderings. But you say they follow you there. I do not doubt but Satan will follow to the closet: that is your citadel; and, like a wise general, he would storm that; and a conquest gained over you here is worth ten elsewhere, for he will easily conquer afterward. Again, in human affairs. * * * But be not afraid: if he follow to the closet, attack him: cry to the strong for strength, and you shall be conqueror.

Another cure is recollection. (See Fletcher.) It is the Holiest of Holies in the soul: there we commune silently with God, and here Satan dares not come, &c., &c., &c

SERMON LXXIX.

A FRIEND AT COURT.

Hebrews, iv., 14.—Seeing then that we have a great High-Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

HE that thoroughly understands the *Romans* understands all the Gospel—and he who will well digest the *Hebrews* must understand the law and the Gospel.

In this book chiefly the law is employed as a schoolmaster, and is to illustrate the Gospel. Paul's great design was to confirm the Hebrews: he convinces them that they were *gainers*, not *losers*, by Christianity; proves that there was

nothing under the Mosaic which is not preserved more excellent under the Gospel. The Jews boasted of Moses as a prophet and lawgiver. St. Paul shows we have one superior. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." The superior dignity of our ambassador Christ Jesus shows our Gospel to be superior. The Jews boasted of Aaron: in our text he shows that in this the Gospel has the advantage: we have a *great* High-priest, far above Aaron.—(Discuss this priesthood.) Two particulars in the text.

- I. The exhortation to steadfastness.
- II. The motive by which it is enforced.

I. The exhortation to steadfastness.

1. By "*our profession*:" it sometimes means the subject-matter of our profession. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."—Heb., iii., 1: elsewhere, not what we profess, but the *act of professing*. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised."—Heb., x., 23. Same sense here: *be* Christians, and *profess* it.

In the Christian world are two kinds of professors. *First* class: all who call themselves Christians; they, *in a sense*, make a profession. Such should hold fast *even* that. Better than a world of infidels. See the heathen world. It is something that men acknowledge the authority of the Scriptures. It is a *ground*: hold fast *there*, and act according to it.

Some may oppose us when reproved for unchristian conduct. "I make no profession of religion," say they, as if they had a right to act irreligiously.—Impudent and wicked.

—Suppose one make some excuse for *social* duties, a kind parent, an honest man, &c. “Oh! I make no profession of these things:” is he the better for saying “he did not profess to love his wife,” &c.: it is no excuse for not performing—shocking.—Same with those who do not profess religion.—Not profess to submit to Christ? Who purchased them with his blood? You *ought* to make a profession; every man’s duty is to be religious, and to profess it.—It is *false* and wicked, as well as impudent: all make some profession unless they are infidels; therefore, “let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

Second class: those not merely nominal, who have received the grace of God in truth, and not backward at times to give a reason of their hope. Such were the Hebrews here addressed. “Let us, therefore, fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

Three particulars distinguish professors from nominal Christians.

1. It is *Scriptural*: when it is as it ought to be, we adopt the truths imbodyed in the profession as the words of God, &c.: the nominal is more on human authority, as from a nurse, &c.—not that it is worse thereby. * * * Of all cant, the cant of infidels is the most contemptible.

But we should have a *better reason* for embracing Christianity. This is no better than a Mohammedan has, or a man in South Seas for his idols: the true Christian does so because he is satisfied it is God’s word, and nothing but with a “thus saith the Lord.”

2. It is *experimental*—not a notion: he realizes the comforting and sanctifying influences. Such were the Hebrews: “partakers of Christ”—not externals only—but intimate union: they partook of the merit of his death to purge them from guilt.—One spirit with their glorified Saviour—“they had believed to the saving of their souls”—not to the conviction of the judgment only.

3. It is *practical*—adorned in his conduct: so the Hebrews: a zeal for performing God’s will, and a patience in suffering it. “God is not unrighteous to forget your work

and labour of love which ye have showed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to his saints, and do minister :” not talking—boasting—but working professors : not captious, contending ones, as if they considered religion merely to exercise ingenuity upon, but loving ones : “ call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions ; partly while ye were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions ; and partly while ye became companions of them that were so used.” This is spoken of their patience. Nominal Christians often abandon their religion when sufferings come : they only stand in sunshine. But real Christians are different : they will *suffer* for it, and become companions of them so used ; not like Demas, or those who left him at his first answer, but like Onesiphorus.

Such is the character of a true professor ; such are to hold fast—persevere in it—danger of being induced to abandon our profession : this danger arises variously.

(1.) *Satan* is busy as a lion : infidels, his allies, endeavour to seduce others. Erroneous opinions also are propagated in the Christian world, which would deprive it of all of value ; as the denying the Divinity and Atonement of Christ, &c. —What would be left worth holding fast ? Nothing to make a religion *for sinners*—no *Gospel*. Some moral precepts would be left—but this is not a religion for *sinners*—no good news. We intimate nothing against morality when connected with Christianity. If one violated the civil laws, and were sentenced to death, and about to die, imagine one comes with bustle, and cries, “ I bring thee Gospel, good news.” What would you think ? A pardon—for that alone would be Gospel. But suppose he gravely pulls out the act that constitutes the offence ; would not reading this be mockery ? Not but that the act is good : however good the *law*, it is not *Gospel*. Such preach some ministers, called *Gospel rational* Christians.

(2.) The *world* is an enemy to our profession also ; and,

(3.) The enemies of our own household, our *hearts*, if not sanctified, and even then kept with all diligence, we shall lose. Hence the need of the exhortation, “ let us hold fast our profession.”

1. Hold the belief of evangelical *doctrine*: maintain charity to all; but determine that none spoil us of the belief of the Gospel by philosophy.

2. Hold fast the experimental profession of evangelical *privileges*—thankful for Christ in our Bibles—pulpits—creeds—yet satisfied with nothing less than Christ in our *hearts*.

3. Hold fast evangelical *duties*. “If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Finally. Hold fast the readiness meekly, yet fearlessly, to profess that religion, the *doctrine* of which we thus *believe*, the *profession* of which we *experience*, the *duties* of which we *exemplify*. Do not skulk into corners.

II. The motive derived from Christ’s priesthood.

The terms of the motive, “We have a great High-priest.” The best of men are most deeply sensible of their corruption and guilt: to such this doctrine of his priesthood is full of comfort—chiefly discussed in this epistle. *We* Christians have a High-priest. Under the law he made atonement by sacrifice, and then on the ground thereof entered the Holy of Holies, and offered up intercessions. So we, but in a more efficacious manner—a *great* High-priest—Paul wishes to contrast—a *greater* than Aaron.

Three grounds of his superiority.

1. Because of where he exercises his ministry—in the *heavens*! Aaron in the Tabernacle—then in the Temple: though splendid, it could decay, and has decayed: as the Jewish could only be exercised at the place appointed by God, when they have not that place they cannot exercise it. But see ours, “Christ is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” What comfort! Even his *human nature* there—a friend at *court*: so we may at all times order our cause, and be sure of a gracious audience.

2. From the more substantial nature of the benefits he confers: this is inferred in his name “*Jesus*,” a *Saviour*, save from sins. Aaron was no *Jesus*, nor his successors; nor the sacrifices, whose virtue was discerned by *faith*, as *types*. But our High-priest is *Jesus*, a *Saviour*—he can cleanse—*once* suffered, and all merit is in his sacrifice.

3. Because of the superior dignity of his original nature, “the Son of God”—“the brightness of his glory and express image of his person.” Aaron and his successors were sons of men, and, as such, were sinful—fallen nature—personal transgressors—offered up atonement for their own sins—*mortal* also—they died, and often by death there was no high-priest. But ours is the Son of God! Sinless: though a humanity, a sinless one—unchargeable with a single guilt—needs no sacrifice for himself—all the stock of his infinite merit is applicable to the purposes of human salvation. Now *immortal*; though dead, he lives—impossible he should be holden of death—even of the manhood—*now* he liveth—*ever*—any moment you may come without fear (of disappointment) of a High-priest to offer for us. “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (this—not “*man*”—but *Son*): “he makes the Son,” not a man, high-priest forever!

Now wherein consists the force of this motive?

(1.) On account of Christ’s priesthood we *ought*.

(2.) We *can* hold fast our profession.

1. We *ought*. Unless some flaw in the Gospel, why change it? Why careless about it—about the propagation of it? It is a *perfect* system—no flaw—and it is Jesus passing into the heavens which *stamps* the whole.

You are *sinners*: no religion will suit you that does not say how you are to be pardoned. The Gospel does this by

saying you have a High-priest: the way is opened by his blood, and kept open by his intercession. Not *guilty* only, but *corrupt* also: no religion will suit you but what shows how you may destroy this. The Gospel tells you by saying you have a High-priest, procuring for you the Holy Ghost to *renovate* you: the Gospel in the priesthood of Christ has a cure, a cordial for all, &c.—Why, then, go elsewhere? You *ought*, then, to hold fast; you will never get a better: no pardon elsewhere—but damned!

2. Some fear they cannot hold fast—fightings, temptations, world, &c. “I shall be overcome and lose all.” So you would if left to yourselves, with all your grace and power, if deprived of *farther* intercourse. But, “seeing then that we have a great High-priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.” You have a High-priest, and he is Jesus, and his blood is so infinite in merit that he can ask of God anything.—Such a friend! Use him, and you are a match for all by the Spirit procured by Jesus. You may stand, and having done all, stand. Even *thou* worm Jacob—fight and overcome. If Jesus be on thy side, and thou availlest thyself of his promised help, thou mayest overcome the powers of darkness.

SERMON LXXX.

THE WAY OF HOLINESS.

Isaiah, xxxv., 8, 9, 10.—And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

- I. A high way.
- II. A holy way.
- III. A plain way.
- IV. A safe way.
- V. A delightful way.

SERMON LXXXI.

A REST TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

Hebrews, iv., 11.—Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

THOUGH man's salvation primarily depends on God—yet secondarily on man.—When we see so many who begun in the spirit, and who ended in the flesh, we need the exhortation.

I. What is the rest ?

II. Consider the exhortation how we are to labour.

III. The motive to actuate us, “lest any man fall,” &c.

I. What is the rest ?

1. It is a rest from outward labour and toil.

2. A rest from sin ; not from sin in the believer, for of this he is saved in *time* ; but from the sinful sights he sees, and the temptations he meets with.—As the mariner is tossed, and put in danger of his life, the sea calms, and he gets to his port in safety.—What joy !

3. It is a glorious rest. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,” &c.—We shall appear with him in glory.—As the soldier comes home crowned with laurels, so we, the soldiers of Christ, shall get home crowned with glory—crowns of glory on our heads !

4. It is an eternal rest.—If we could look to any period when that rest would cease, it would cause pain.

II. Consider the exhortation how we are to labour.

1. In prayer.

2. In self-examination—a duty too much neglected by Christians.

—Query ? A third head ?

III. The motive to actuate us, “lest any man fall,” &c.

As faith is the grand means of our salvation, so is unbelief of our destruction. It is the first cause of our sinning,

and we never disobey God till we disbelieve him. See our first parents: they disbelieved that they would die, and then they disobeyed.—

For example, in the context here is the Israelites.

SERMON LXXXII.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

Revelation, xx., 11–15.—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.

1. INTRODUCE the general judgment by showing the states of the book of Revelation, and by dwelling on them in their order, particularly the millennium; after which this follows.

2. Prove the certainty of the judgment from the whole word of God.—Quote all the passages in the prophets, &c., for this purpose.

3. Describe it by again going over all those passages, and adding any new matter to heighten the awful scene; as Daniel, &c., &c.

4. Show the sinner condemned by *himself*; God causing the sinner even to pass sentence on his own soul, *not that he was a sinner*, but that *he neglected so great a salvation*. Describe that salvation—*God dying for man!*—*Divine blood!*—Show how no other ransom would do; and make the sinner confess that such infinity of love so despised demanded infinity of punishment.—Show the sinner as craving his own sentence at the hands of God, and his mouth shut—God unwilling to damn him—but justice requiring it. “I never made hell for you! but depart into everlasting fire.”

—In the application—ask the sinner to weigh the cost!—that he sees the *fair end* of his race; ask, can he endure everlasting fire, or that torture shown under the strongest figures? If he think he can, if his bones brass, &c., well, go on! you will soon receive this just reward!—If awakened, then *stop*; do not take another step, lest that step should be into hell! Cry for mercy, &c.

—“Behold, he cometh with clouds,” &c.; clothed with a garment down to the foot, &c.—his head and his hair were white like wool, and his feet like burnished brass—his countenance is as the sun shining in his strength.—The sight made John fall at his feet as dead!—like a jasper, &c.—The elders round him in white, and crowns of gold, &c.—Out of the throne came lightnings and thunderings, &c., and before the throne a sea, &c.—Fall on us and hide us from his face. Who shall be able to stand?—A great multitude clothed in white, &c.—a sea of glass mingled with fire, and standing on it with harps, &c.—I heard, as it were, the sound of many waters—his eyes were as a flame of fire—on his head were many crowns, and a name written, “*The Word of God.*”—Out of his mouth goes a sharp sword—King of Kings, &c.—He that is unjust, let him be so still! &c., &c., &c.

THE END.











